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PARABLES OF

KRUMMACHER

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THE PARABLES

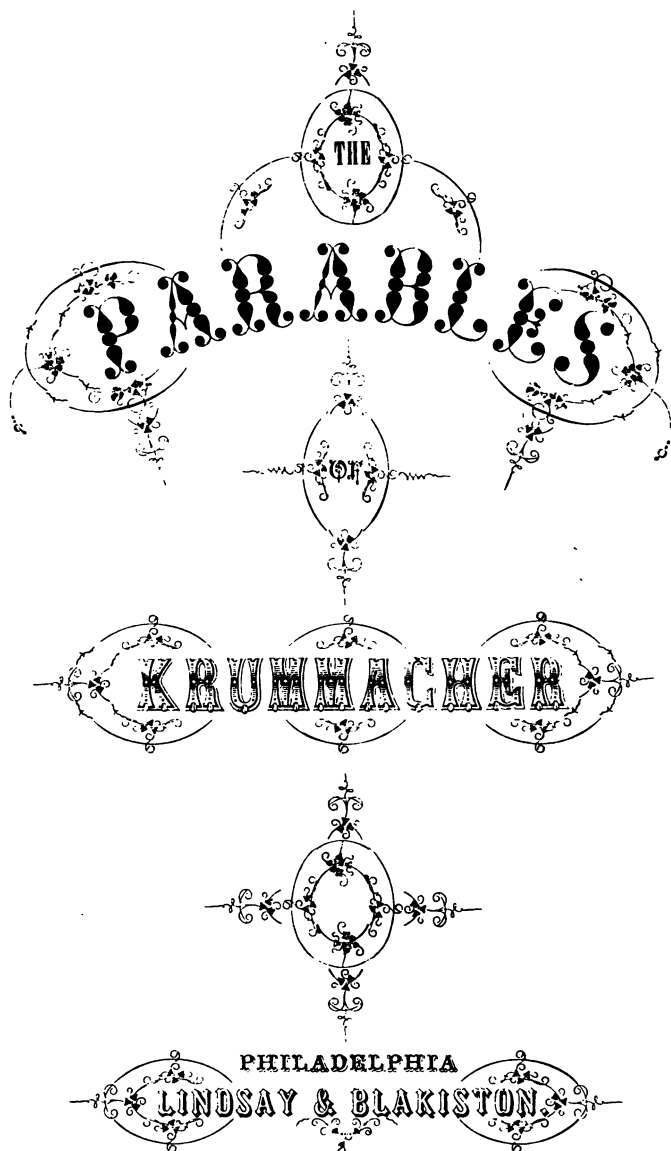
OF

FREDERIC ADOLPHUS KRUMMACHER.



The Rose and the Lily.





THE PARABLES

OF

FREDERIC ADOLPHUS KRUMMACHER.

FROM THE SEVENTH GERMAN EDITION.

With Twenty-six Illustrations.



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P R E F A C E.

ONCE more these productions of an earlier period of my life are to go forth in a new edition. They have survived, with myself, nearly half a century; they have enjoyed the honour of translation into various languages; and have been frequently reprinted, besides figuring in many a reading-book and class-book. How, then, should I value them lightly, as has been asserted? The majority of them took their origin from the inner life of their author, or were called forth by particular events in his career. Therefore I consider that they have a claim alike to respect and indulgent consideration; and trust that in this new edition they will obtain both at the hands of my worthy readers.

The Dissertation on the Nature of the Poetry of Parables, prefixed to the first and second editions, has been omitted here. To what purpose, indeed, is a long preface on the construction of Parables, when they themselves stand marshalled in array? It were better to conclude with an axiom from the golden A B C of dear Claudius—

“The Parables are fair and good;
But then—they must be understood.”

F. A. KRUMMACHER.



THE ROBIN.

A ROBIN came in the depth of winter to the window of a pious peasant, as if it would like to come in. Then the peasant opened his window, and took the confiding little creature kindly into his house. So it picked up the crumbs which fell from his table, and his children loved and cherished the little bird. But when spring returned, and the bushes and trees put forth leaves, the peasant opened his window; and the little guest flew into the neighbouring wood, built its nest, and sang merrily. And behold, at the

return of winter, the robin came back to the house of the peasant, and its mate came with it. The man and his children were very glad when they saw the two little birds, which looked at them so confidently with their bright eyes.

And the children said: "The little birds look at us as if they were going to say something."

Then their father answered: "If they could speak, they would say, Kind confidence awakens confidence, and love begets love."



NATHAN.

NATHAN, a prophet and wise teacher at Salem, sat among his disciples, and the words of wisdom flowed like honey from his lips.

Then said one of his disciples, named Gamaliel: "Master, how is it that we love so well to receive thy instructions, and to listen to the words of thy mouth?"

The modest teacher smiled, and said: "Is not my name interpreted 'to give?' Man receives with pleasure, if you know how to give."

"What dost thou give?" asked Hillel, another of those who sat at his feet.

And Nathan answered: "I offer you a golden apple in a silver rind. You receive the rind, but you find the apple."

Another time Gamaliel asked the wise Nathan, and said: "Master, why dost thou teach us in parables?"

Nathan answered, and said: "Listen, my son! When



I became a man, the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Become a teacher of the people, and testify of the truth.—And the Spirit of God came upon me. Then I let my beard grow, and clothed myself in coarse garments, and went among the people, to admonish them with hard and vehement words. But men fled from me; neither did they receive my sayings, or they applied them to others.

“Then I was vexed in my spirit, and went out in the night to Mount Hermon, and said in my heart: If they refuse light, may they wander in night and gloom, and perish in the darkness!—Thus I cried, and wandered in anger through the dark night.

“And, behold, it was twilight; the first beams of the sun gilded the sky, and the dew of morning dropped downward on Mount Hermon. The night vanished, and Hermon exhaled sweet odours; for the beams of the morning sun were soft and gentle, and misty clouds hovered over the summits of the mountains, and bedewed the earth. And men wandered forth joyfully, and looked up to the rosy morning sky. Then day descended from heaven; the sun went forth on his course, and darted his rays on the dewy herbs.

“And I stood and beheld, and strange feelings came into my heart. The whispering breeze of morning arose, and I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Behold, Nathan, thus Heaven sends to the children of earth the most precious gift, the sweet light of day.

“When I descended from the mountain,” continued the prophet, “the Spirit of the Lord led me to a pomegranate-tree. The tree was shady and beautiful, and bore flowers

and fruit at the same time. I stood in its shade looking at the blossoms, and said: How lovely and rosy they are, like the delicate flush of innocence on the blooming cheeks of the daughters of Israel!—And when I approached nearer, I found the delicious fruit concealed among the leaves.

“Then the word of the Lord came to me from the pomegranate-tree, saying: Behold, Nathan, thus Nature promises the delicious fruit by the simple flower, and offers it from the shade of the leaves, concealing her hand.

“And now,” continued the wise Nathan, “I returned to Salem joyful in heart; I put off my coarse garments, anointed my head, and taught truth in cheerful form and in parables.

“For Truth is serious, and has few friends; therefore she loves to appear in simple, cheerful guise, in human form among human kind, that she may win friends and disciples.”

THE BLOOMING VINE.

SAMUEL, the judge and high priest of Israel, one day visited the school of the prophets at Giboah, which he had founded; and rejoiced at the progress which the pupils of the prophets made in various kinds of knowledge, and in the art of playing the lute, and in songs.

Among them was a youth, named Adoniah, the son of Milcha, who found favour in the eyes of Samuel; for his countenance was fair to look upon, and the sound of his voice was full of strength and sweetness. But his heart



was filled with pride and empty delusion, because he was superior to others in knowledge and understanding. He fancied himself wiser than seven sages, and behaved haughtily towards his teachers, and his lips were full of empty words, and of conceit. Then the judge of Israel had compassion on the boy Adoniah, for he loved him more than the rest, because he was full of wisdom, and fair to look upon. Therefore Samuel said: The Spirit of the Lord has chosen this boy to be a prophet in Israel; but he strives against him, and will mar his work.

Then Samuel led forth the youth into the mountains, to a vineyard which lay towards Ramah. And behold, it was the time that the vine was in bloom.

Then Samuel lifted up his voice, and said: "Adoniah, what seest thou?" Adoniah answered, "I see a vineyard, and I inhale the sweet odour of the blossoms." And Samuel said: "Approach and examine the flower of the vine."

The youth obeyed, and answered: "It is a tender little flower, simple and humble." Then Samuel entered, and said: "And yet it produces God's fruit, to gladden man's heart, and to strengthen his body, and make it fair. Adoniah, thus is the pleasant vine in the time of its bloom, before it brings forth the delicious fruit. Remember the vine in the days of thy blooming youth!"

And Adoniah, the son of Milcha, kept all these words of Samuel in his heart, and henceforth he walked with humble and gentle spirit. Then all men loved Adoniah, and said: The Spirit of God is come upon the youth.

And Adoniah increased in wisdom and beauty, and became a man like the herdman of Tekoa, and Isaiah the son of Amoz, and his name was praised in Israel.

THE BROOK.

A PEASANT sat one day by a brook that flowed past his meadow, surveying his grazing cattle. But his heart was not glad, for he saw that the grass grew but scantily, and would not supply his cattle for half the summer. Then his neighbour came to him, perceiving his gloomy countenance, and inquired into the cause of his secret sorrow. The other began to speak of his cares, and of the scanty produce of his meadow.

And the neighbour answered: "Do as I have done. My meadow, which lies on this same brook, was formerly barren and unfruitful. Then I led the brook into it; and the grass now grows thick and high, even to the bellies of my oxen."

The countryman rejoiced at the prudent advice; he went out and hired labourers, and set to work with them, and they cut the dike of the brook.

But behold, the brook inundated the meadow, so that it became like a lake, and the land was filled with sand and gravel. Then the unhappy peasant tore his hair, and ran to his neighbour, reproaching him angrily for his counsel.

But his neighbour answered: "My friend, why art thou angry with me for the counsel I gave thee with a good intent? Be angry with thyself and thy impatient heart. In small channels shouldst thou have led the fertilising brook through thy meadows, and not have inundated it with rushing waters; for then the brook carries away its fertilising powers, and likewise the soil of thy meadow, leaving nothing behind but sand and gravel."



THE LITTLE BENEFACTRESS.

It was a cold and severe winter. The little Minna, the only daughter of charitable parents, collected the crumbs and small pieces of bread, and kept them carefully. Twice a day she went into the garden, scattering the crumbs; and the birds came and picked them up; but the little girl's hands trembled with cold in the bitter air.

The parents watched her, and were glad at the lovely sight, and said: "Why are you doing that, Minna?"

"All is covered with ice and snow," answered Minna;

"the little creatures cannot find anything; they are poor now. Therefore I feed them, as the rich people help and assist the poor."

Then the father said: "But you cannot provide for them all."

Little Minna answered: "Do not all children in the world do as I do, even as all rich men take care of the poor?"

Then the father looked at the mother of the little maiden, and said: "O holy innocence!"



SOCRATES AND CRITIAS.

SOCRATES, the son of Sophroniscus, one of the sages of Greece, who in the night of paganism longed for light, spoke one day as he sat among his disciples of the overruling providence of the Deity, which, being omnipresent, did hear and see every thing, taking care of all creatures; and that we should always feel and recognise this more, the more we honoured and revered the Supreme Being.

In the emotion of his heart, the wise man alluded to a parable from the poems of the incomparable Homer, likening Divine Providence to a mother, who, with gentle and unseen hand, fans the flies from her sleeping child.

Among his disciples was Critias, the traitor, who afterwards condemned him to death. He laughed at the comparison, for he thought it ignoble and common. Therefore he laughed and mocked at it in his heart. However,



Socrates observed it, and understood his thoughts. He turned to him, and said: "Dost thou not feel, my dear Critias, how nearly allied the human in its simplicity is to the divine, and how the former must raise us to the latter?" Thus he spoke. Critias departed with an angry heart; but Socrates continued to instruct the other disciples.

When Socrates was sentenced to death by the malice of Critias, and condemned to drink the poisoned cup, the tyrant remembered the words and the parable of the sage, and he came to him, and said deridingly: "Well, Socrates, will the gods even now protect thee from the flies?" But Socrates smiled, and said: "The gods, Critias, now lead me to rest after my day's work is done. How could I still think of the flies!"

THE MAN ON MOUNT CARMEL.

IN a little village at the foot of Mount Carmel lived a wise man, to whom the Spirit of God had given the power to comfort and to heal. He went into every dwelling where a sick man was lying, and healed him, or he comforted and strengthened the dying with gentle words, and soothed the complaints of those that wept; for he knew the hidden power of salutary herbs, as he knew the hearts of men, though he had hardly attained to manhood. Therefore he was loved by all men; each one besought him to come to his dwelling, and his fame was spread far and wide.

But behold, there came from the land of Mizraim a pestilence into the village of Mount Carmel and the adjacent country, and many people fell sick and died, for it was a grievous pestilence. But wheresoever any one was sick of the evil disease, they sent for the wise man, that he might come to heal and to console by day and by night.

Then his strength failed him ; and his soul was troubled, because the pestilence was often mightier than the strength of his art and of the medicinal herbs, and he began to fear for his own life.

For he wanted humility, the crown of wisdom, so that he trusted in himself and in his knowledge, but not in the Lord.

Then the Spirit led him forth to Mount Carmel, and he doubted in himself if he should remain in the mountain and not return, or whether he should gather salutary herbs and plants for the comfort and refreshment of the sick.

So he went, and said in his heart : " Nature has been my guide from the days of my youth. Therefore now she shall teach me what to do."

He was standing before a flower, more beautiful in its bloom than Solomon in all his glory. Then he said : " This flower, with all her beauty and her fresh young charms, blooms only *for herself* ; she opens her bosom to the rays of the sun and the breeze, which comes from the west over the sea. What should man do more, but live for himself, without caring for others ? I will remain on Mount Carmel and bloom among the flowers, till, when my race is run, I fade at last like a flower, imperceptibly and gently."

Now a butterfly fluttered over the flower. He beheld it, and said: "No, thou dost teach me another thing. I will return to mankind, to the great and rich cities; I will go into the palaces, to earn the sweet fruit of joy and pleasure from my knowledge. As the butterfly hovers over the graceful flower, thus my life shall spread itself over my arts."

Saying this, he bent over the flower. Behold, there was a dead bee in the calyx. Too heavily laden with the delicate dust, she had breathed forth her little soul, in the midst of her labours.

He beheld, and gazed silently on the lifeless form of the insect, while the deep crimson of shame mantled his cheek. "Spirit of the Lord," exclaimed he at last, "I acknowledge thee in Nature; pardon my anger and my folly! From henceforth I will follow thee, and return, a faithful disciple, to thee and my calling."

Then he collected the rarest plants and herbs of the mountain, and went humbly and with cheerful countenance back to the village, to the dwellings of the sufferers,



THE RHINE.

WHEN, in the beginning, nature had laid the foundations of the mountains, and hollowed the depth of the ocean, she went forth from her tabernacle of clouds to the summit of St. Gothard, and said: "It is meet to join goodness to greatness; a wide sphere of action should be given to the

strong. Thou art firm ; but I will give thee a son, who shall display thy strength, and spread far and wide the blessings which thou receivest from above." She pronounced the word, and lo ! the Rhine sprang from the mountain.

Wantonly and freely, full of vigour and strength, the youthful stream flowed from the mountain. Playfully he rushed into the Bodensee, but it did not bind him. The waves of the lake parted ; unimpaired and unchanged, the young river reappeared and continued his course : for he was a son of Nature, born on the mountains from the clouds.

Grown a youth in strength, he proceeded on his way. A noble mind never errs in its choice, but chooses what is great and good.

He forced his way through rocks and mountains ; his labours exercised his vigour and moderated his turbulence, and hills covered with vineyards crowned the path of the youth.

Magnificent was his course. Hundreds of streams and numberless rills accompanied him, mingling their silvery waves with his mighty flood : for the divine attracts the noble, and the high strives to join itself to the highest.

Calmer he proceeded on his way in manhood ; more composedly he flowed on, but not more feebly. The rigour of winter would bind him with eternal fetters ; he tore them asunder like threads.

He had tried the strength of his youth, and rent the rocks.

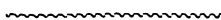
His surface now resembled a smooth mirror. Not the

cheering vine, the produce of the mountains, but rich corn-fields surrounded him ; he carried on his back ships and rafts.

Thus peaceful power brings forth the useful, to join the beautiful.

He approached the end of his course. Then human industry and art, and the nature of the soil, divided the patient river into many branches, which are called by other names.

But wheresoever his strength and his blessings are remembered, men call him Father Rhine.



THE MOSS-ROSE.

THE angel who tends the flowers, and sprinkles the dew on them in the stillness of night, slumbered one morning in spring under the shade of a rose-bush.

When he awoke, he said with friendly countenance : "Loveliest of my children, I thank thee for thy refreshing fragrance and thy cooling shade. Couldst thou ask a favour, how willingly would I grant it !"

"Adorn me with a new grace," implored the spirit of the rose-bush. And the angel adorned the queen of flowers with a veil of moss.

Lovely she appeared in her simple array, the moss-rose, "the most beautiful of her kind.

Sweet Lina, bid adieu to finery and glittering jewels, and follow the maternal beckoning of Nature.

SALOME.

SALOME, the mother of the affectionate John, stood one evening lost in contemplation on the banks of the Lake of Genesareth. The sun was setting, the roseate hue of evening shone on the vault of heaven, and a blue mist hovered over the mountains. Salome looked downwards on the surface of the lake.

Then Zebedee, the father, came out, and perceiving Salome his wife, he said: "Why art thou musing thus alone, Salome? and why are thine eyes filled with tears?" And Salome answered: "I gaze on the light of the setting sun in the calm waters."

"Why dost thou not rather look up to the radiant sky?" asked Zebedee. Then Salome answered, and said: "I did before look up to the glorious light of heaven; but now it appears to me more beautiful in the peaceful flood of the clear lake. Behold, how calmly the waters flow, not knowing that they reflect the radiance and the glory of heaven. Then I thought of our beloved son with maternal tenderness.

"Is not John, our affectionate child, as lowly and humble as formerly, and yet he is the friend of the divine Man of Nazareth?"



JOHN AND PETER.

JOHN and Peter were once talking of former times when the Lord was yet with them, and they began also to speak of the day when the Lord was anointed at Bethany. Then Peter said: "Dost thou remember, how seriously He looked at Judas, when he said: Why has not this ointment been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? —And at us He looked kindly, though we approved of the saying of Judas."

Then John said: "I questioned the Master concerning

it. Then He said to me: You did not speak rightly; but in the integrity of your heart you spoke sincerely. How could I be wroth with you, and not reprove you mildly? But Judas lacked the chief virtue—truthfulness.” Thus he said. And John added: “Did he not, a short time after, betray the Master with a kiss?”

Thus said the disciple whom Jesus loved. In the eyes of the grave Peter tears were glistening; for he remembered that he also had once been a traitor to truth.



THE CORN-FIELD.

THE warm days of summer had ripened the produce of the field; the full ears rustled in the wind; and the owner of the field went forth to see whether it was time to send the reapers. He thought of the size of his garners, and calculated the gain which the richness of his field would bring him; for though he was rich, he was discontented, and his heart was occupied with earthly cares.

Then the wise pastor of the village met him on his walk, and said: “The earth produces this year bread in abundance. The ears are heavy; and soon the reapers will bind rich sheaves.”

“Very true,” replied the countryman; “man could hardly have expected a more blessed year. The ground will restore the seed manifold.”

Then the worthy minister answered and said: “Then let the reasonable master of the earth imitate the inanimate

soil which he cultivates; for it receives but a little seed, and gives it back multiplied. Man receives so much, and often brings forth so little."

This saying cut the avaricious farmer to the heart, and he felt ashamed;—for he was covetous, and full of cares for the days to come, thinking only how to hoard up treasures. But he concealed his confusion, and said to the minister: "Every man should be industrious, and take proper care of his household, that he may be able some day to assist others. Therefore man is to work in the sweat of his brow, that he may produce for himself in abundance what is useful and good, like the well-cultivated fields, which multiply the seed. Thus nature joins ear to ear in the field, and the whole corn-field seems to be one immense blade."

But the minister replied: "The appearance of the corn-field is indeed so, and one ear is close to the other, to supply many with bread; but the time of seed is short, and the corn grows without human aid of itself, bringing forth the blade and the ear, and the time of harvest is short likewise. So man may look leisurely on his fields, surveying the blue corn-flower, the crimson poppy, and the purple flowers, which bloom among the blades, and hearing the song of the lark, which rises up to heaven from the furrows. For those flowers bloom not in vain, neither does the little bird warble in vain, as it soars from the uniform blades. They are to remind the master of the field, that there is something else beside the dust of the furrow and the ear growing from it; they are to call to his mind, that striving and labouring for the useful, he is to

remember the beautiful and the good, and elevate himself from the low earth to a higher aim."

Thus spoke the worthy pastor. But his saying vexed the miserly countryman, and he went away with knitted brow: for the good doctrine of a wise man seems mockery to the evil heart, and is to him like a bitter herb.



THE CROCODILE.

In the hoary times of old, a host of men quitted their dwelling-places, and wandered down to the land through which the river Nile flows. They rejoiced at the sight of the magnificent river, and built huts on its banks. Soon after, the terrible monster called the crocodile came from the floods, destroying both man and beast in its horrid jaws. Then the people cried with a loud voice to their god Osiris, to free them from the monster. And Osiris answered by the mouth of the wise priests, saying: "Is it not enough that the deity gave you strength and reason? He who implores for help, without using his own power, will call in vain!"

Then they seized swords and staves, and besieged the monster in his marshy abode; they erected walls and dikes, and in a few days they completed works which before they weened not of their power to do. So they became conscious of that hidden power, by which in later times the mighty pyramids and obelisks were erected; and they



invented many tools, and became acquainted with arts which they did not know before.

For by the combat against hostile powers the dormant abilities of man are roused.

However, the people were in want of proper weapons fully to vanquish the scaly monster of the flood. They were only able to repel its attacks for a short time, and they were contented therewith.

By degrees, the zeal to defend themselves grew faint. The monsters increased and multiplied, and their fury became more and more terrible. Then the foolish and degenerating people resolved to worship the crocodile as a god. Voluntarily they offered sacrifices; the monster became more powerful than ever, but the people were sunk in cowardice and stupor.

The bow which is forever on the stretch will break at last; and revenge will reach the tyrant. Osiris had compassion on the miserable people, and encouraged them to new exertions by the mouth of the wise priest. Then the banks of the river echoed with the shouts of the warriors, and the waters became red with the blood of the slain. The strength of the combatants began to fail; then the priest and the distressed people called to Osiris for help, and the deity listened in mercy to their cry.

A little animal, the ichneumon, appeared on the banks of the Nile.

"Behold," exclaimed the priest, "Osiris sends help!"

"How, dost thou mock us?" cried the people. Then the priest answered, and said: "Wait for the issue, and confide in the supreme power. By the hand of the deity

great things may be brought to pass by means apparently trifling."

The number of the terrible monsters decreased visibly. The people beheld with admiration how the little animal was searching diligently for the eggs and the young of the crocodile. Thus it destroyed in a short time the lives of hundreds of those formidable tyrants of the Nile, and released the land of its plague,—a thing that so many heads and hands had not been able to accomplish.

"See!" said the wise priest; "if you wish to extinguish an evil, attack its germs and roots. Then a trifle may do what afterwards the united efforts of many will be unable to accomplish."

THE CAT.

Two learned men, who had studied nature all their life, and were daily examining all kinds of creatures, and knew how to speak about each one, sat one day together, talking of beasts and worms, fishes and birds, also of all species of trees and plants, from the cedar on Lebanon to the hyssop which grows on the wall. And both were of one mind, and praised one another.

At last they began to speak of the nature and the habits of the cat; then they disagreed and contended very sharply. For one of them said, "The cat was the most malicious and noisome animal, false and mischievous, a tiger in disposition as well as in outward appearance, though happily not in size and strength, for which latter circumstance we could not thank and praise Heaven enough."



But the other said, "The cat might be compared to the lion; for she was, like him, noble and generous, resembling him at the same time in her exterior; she was cleanly and gentle, and therefore naturally at enmity with the dirty and intrusive dog; in short, the most useful animal, for which man could not thank and praise Heaven enough.

Then the other flew into a passion, for he was fond of dogs, and referred to the dog of Tobit, and of Ulysses, and of the great king.*

But the other opposed him, by alluding to the cats of that philosopher † who had diffused light over the world, and excelled others in wisdom and knowledge.

Without coming to an agreement, they parted at enmity with each other; the one went to his living birds, some of which the cats had eaten; the other to his stuffed ones, which the mice were destroying, to his great vexation.

Such are the judgments of passion and egotism.



THE IMITATORS.

SPRING had returned, and the first nightingale was singing among the fresh foliage of the hazel-bushes. Leaning against a tree, Menalcas, the good shepherd, stood listening to her melody.

Suddenly a host of rude boys surrounded the bush, and listened for a short time; but soon they said to each other,

* Frederick the Great of Prussia.

† Baron de Leibnitz, who was very fond of cats.

"Now it is our turn." And they pulled out little vessels of clay made in the shape of a bird, filled with water, and having a whistle to them, to imitate the voice of the nightingale. These they put to their lips, and began to whistle aloud, thinking to rival the melodious bird.

Then the nightingale was mute, and flew to the solitary copse by the side of a murmuring brook; thither Menalcas, the good shepherd, followed, listening again.

The lads returned to the town, and the streets rang with their whistling, so that the inhabitants shut their windows, to exclude the noise.

Thus pitiful imitation is often found by the side of sublime art.



THE HERDSMAN OF TEKOA.

Amos, the herdsman and seer of Tekoa, came down from the mountains towards Samaria, and went among the people prophesying. And, though he reproached Israel with their sins and their servility, the people heard him gladly; for he spoke with authority, power, and grace, representing stern and severe truths by lovely images of simple, pastoral life; and the people kept his sayings in their hearts.

Then Amazia, the priest at Bethel, went to Amos the herdsman, for he thought in his heart: "Amos shall teach me the poetry of his psalms, that I may speak like him, and gain the hearts of the people." And the priest

of Bethel thought soon to excel the simple herdsman of Tekoa in the wisdom of the seer. But Amazia was not a priest after the heart of the Lord, but a priest of the golden calves, who flattered the King Jeroboam and deceived the people, that he might fulfil his own lusts. And he resolved to deceive the people still more; therefore he went to Amos, and said: "Who art thou, that thou speakest thus in wondrous words, and the multitude heareth thee?" Amos answered and said: "I am a herdsman of Tekoa."

Then Amazia asked: "How did thy father teach thy heart, or in what school of the prophets hast thou learned the art of the seer?"

The herdsman Amos answered and said: "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. I have spent the days of my youth keeping the flocks of my father, and gathering mulberries."

Then Amazia was astonished, and asked: "Who was it, then, that gave thee the power to see visions, and taught thee to speak mighty words?"

Amos answered and said: "The Spirit of the Lord." And Amazia asked: "Tell me, in what temple did He appear to thee, and in what sanctuary did He reveal himself unto thee?" Amos answered and said: "In his sanctuary on the mountains of Tekoa, which reach unto the ends of the world!"

Then Amazia was wroth, and said: "Thou speakest dark sayings; I do not understand thee."

Amos answered and said: "The Spirit comprehendeth what is of the Spirit."

But Amazia did not understand the words of Amos the

herdsman and seer, for the Spirit of God was not in him. And he went to the king, and said: "Amos causeth men to rebel against thee; his sayings will destroy the land."

Thus said Amazia; for he comprehended not the Spirit which dwelt in Amos.

And Amos returned to the mountains.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

EARLY on a morning in the beginning of August, Sophron accompanied his father to the field. The lark carolled above their heads.

"A sweet bird!" said the father. "She greets with her cheerful song the first dawning of day, and the first waking of spring; she soars up to the sky, that all the world may hear her song, and ceases only when Nature has completed her work."

The youth assented to the words of his father; "But," added he, "why does Nature deprive us so soon of the incomparably beautiful song of the nightingale? It seems as if she had been singing only a few days!"

"You are discontented," answered his father, smiling. "But that is the fashion of most men. Must the incomparable, which Heaven grants us sparingly, only serve to make us indifferent and cold towards the good and agreeable, which he gives us in abundance?"

"Not indifferent, my dear father," replied the youth; "but man has received a higher standard — and should he

not strive to attain the highest aim? Should he not esteem the inferior beauty, but honour and prize the highest?—and should not the appreciation of the beautiful lead him to adore the perfection of beauty?”

“Well said, my son,” answered the father; “I agree with you. I was only speaking of the general way of thinking of mankind, not of human nature as it ought to be.”

After a little while Sophron began again: “If the highest beauty alone should be the aim of man, why does Nature grant us the enjoyment of the most lovely song for so short a season?”

The father answered: “Do you remember what you felt when you heard the nightingale singing for the first time?”

“Oh,” said the son, “how should I ever forget that beauteous evening!”

“You were touched,” continued the father, “by the lofty and sublime voice which Nature has bestowed upon this delicate creature. The fable of simple antiquity, that the soul of a beloved poet had transmigrated into the little bird, seemed to thee truth; for every note appeared to thee full of thought and feeling,—each the highest perfection in itself.”

“O my father,” replied the youth, “the more intimate we are with Nature, the more our heart is ready to receive her promptings, the easier we comprehend the child-like assertion of the simple days of old.”

“And after you had heard the nightingale sing for several weeks,” said the father, “you listened indeed with pleasure, but no longer with emotion; your rapture

vanished by degrees,—you became cooler, more indifferent,—was it not so?”

The youth answered, “Yes;” and looked at his father with surprise.

The father smiled and said: “This question is not superfluous, though it may appear so to you. We must know ourselves, before we are able to judge about the surrounding objects correctly and justly. Do not you think it possible, that by degrees you might have entirely lost the sense of admiration with which this touching and wonderful melody at first inspired you?”

“But,” interrupted the youth, “we enjoy the sweet song of the lark throughout all spring and summer.”

“True, my son,” replied the other. “With man beauty is a necessity; the kindness of Nature, therefore, supplies us at all times with the beautiful. But the most beautiful, the perfect,—*that* is sacred;—it is to lead us to the divine origin from whence it came; and may not become common or be desecrated. The former we have, therefore, at all times; the latter is granted more rarely, that we may receive it into our inmost souls. Does not the nightingale’s song inspire you at this morning hour with the same feelings as when you first heard it?” The youth bent his head in cheerful assent; and father and son walked on in silence, side by side.

THE MORNING DREAM.

A LITTLE boy, called Leopold, came down one morning from his bedroom, crying bitterly, with large tears rolling down his cheeks. His father and mother were terrified, because they believed that something had happened to the child, or that he was ill, and suffering great pain in his head or limbs. And they asked the child, "Dear child, what is the matter with you? Has any one harmed you?"

Then the child answered: "Ah! I had twelve pretty white lambs, and they skipped around me and licked my hand, and I was sitting in the midst of them with a crook; but now they are all gone, and I don't know where they are." When he had said this, he began again to cry bitterly.

Now the parents understood the sorrow of the child, that it was but a dream, and they smiled at one another. But the father said: "We may smile, mother—but our sighs and ill-humours are often like the tears of the child; and do not our wishes and desires often resemble Leopold's dreams?"

However, when Leopold continued to be sorry for his twelve lambs, the parents considered what might be done; and the father said: "Leopold, I will go and look for your lambs." And he went and bought a lamb, took it home, and placed it so that the boy perceived it. Then the boy was glad, and ran up to it, caressed it, and said: "Yes, that is it! that is it! Just so it looked! just like this!"



And he was highly delighted ; but thought no more of the other eleven lambs, nor did he ask for them.

Then the father smiled again, and said to the mother: "In dreams and tears we grown-up people are often like little Leopold. Oh, that we resembled him in contentment and lowly joy when small gifts are vouchsafed !"



DAVID AND SAUL.

A SPIRIT of heaviness and mistrust had come upon Saul the king of Israel, and his heart was greatly troubled. Then his servant said unto him : "Let us seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp, that he may play before thee, and thou mayest recover." And Saul answered : "Seek me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me."

And they went and brought to him David the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

So when the king's heart was heavy and troubled, David took the harp and played with his hand. Then Saul wept, and his heart was relieved, and he became merry and of good cheer. And Saul loved David, and made him his armour-bearer. Jonathan, the friend of David, was astonished at the power of music in the hand of the youth.

After a time Saul became evil, the Spirit of God departed from him, and he conceived envy and malice in his heart ; and when the son of Jesse played the harp before him, he cast the javelin which was in his hand at David, intending

to nail him to the wall; but David turned him about and fled.

Then said Jonathan, David's friend: "Where is now thy art and the power of thy music?" But David answered and said: "My music is the same as before; but the heart of my lord the king is changed. Formerly it was heavy and full of sorrow, but now it has become evil. How, then, could the melody of the harp gladden him?"

THE ROSES OF EARTH.

EVE, the mother of the human race, walked one day solitarily and mournfully over the desecrated fields of the sinful earth: suddenly she perceived at a distance a rose-bush, covered with blooming roses, which diffused a lustre as of the red morn over the green foliage. "Oh!" exclaimed she, in rapture, "am I deceived, or do I indeed see the lovely flower of Eden? I scent her odours of paradise from afar! Welcome, sweet symbol of innocence and joy! thou dost reveal that the bliss of Eden will bloom for us even among the thorns of earth. How thy beauty and thy pure balm gladden my heart!" As she spoke thus, contemplating the roses, a gentle breeze moved the bush and the branches. And behold, the leaves of the blooming roses were loosened and scattered on the ground.

Then Eve sighed, and said: "Alas! are you also children of death? I read your meaning, ye images of earthly joy."

In melancholy silence she looked upon the faded rose-leaves. But soon she lifted up her eyes again, and said: "Be then to me, so long as the bud conceals you, lovely images of innocence."

With these words she bent over them. She perceived the thorns, and started; "Oh!" exclaimed she, "have you also need of defence? Does conscience mar even *your* pleasures, bringing forth these thorns — and blushes? Nevertheless, be welcome, beautiful children of spring, as an image of the celestial morning light over the thorny earth."



THE ELDER-STAFF.

A HUNTSMAN walked with his son in the fields; a deep brook separated them. The boy wanted to pass over to his father, but he could not, for the brook was wide. Immediately he cut a branch from the next bush, put the stick into the brook, leant upon it, and gave a great leap. But, behold, it was the branch of an elder-tree; and as the boy was flinging himself over the brook, the stick broke, the boy fell into the deep water, and the waves splashed and foamed over his head.

A shepherd, who saw this from a distance, ran up, raising a loud cry; the boy, however, blew the water from his mouth, and swam laughing to the other side.

Then the shepherd said to the huntsman: "You seem to have taught your son many things; but one thing you

have forgotten. Why did you not accustom him to investigate the interior, before he opens his heart to confidence? If he had examined the soft pith of the tree, he would not have relied on the deceiving bark."

"My friend," answered the huntsman, "I have taught him to use his eyes and his strength; thus I may leave him to experience. Time will teach him suspicion; but he will manfully withstand temptation, for his eye is keen, and his strength is tried."



THE CUCKOO.

OLD Conrad and his neighbour Paul, two industrious husbandmen, were walking one day, about the time of Pentecost, in their fields, looking at the corn, and conversing about many different things. For old Conrad was considered a wise man in all the neighbourhood; he had been in foreign countries, and knew how to speak on many subjects. Paul was eager to hear and to learn, and put question after question about things he wanted to know.

As they were proceeding on their walk, they heard a cuckoo; and Conrad, as well as Paul, listened with pleasure to the familiar voice. Then Paul said: "It is strange; always the same thing and the same note, neither is there any thing pleasant in the sound, and yet every one hears it with pleasure. As soon as the bird makes himself heard, one man asks the other in the village: 'Did you hear the



cuckoo?' and the young people in the streets imitate his cry; even in the clocks he nestles and we hear his voice, and in the fairs one might fain close one's ears to the imitating screams." Thus said Paul, looking at his neighbour to hear his opinion on the matter. Then old Conrad answered and said: "The note of the cuckoo is indeed not sweet, and might rather be called a scream; however, we hear it with pleasure. But this is to be accounted for; we hear it only when the sun shines, on warm bright days, when the trees thrive and bloom, and the fields promise fruit. Thus he announces to man the blessings of the year; thus it is easy to sing to the merry heart; and the words of great and rich people are always applauded and praised, when spoken at a plentiful table."

Then Paul smiled, and said: "Nevertheless the cuckoo is a screamer, and has nothing praiseworthy in himself. He does not even build his own nest, but troubles other birds with his eggs and his young ones. The whole summer he does nothing but fly from one tree to another. I dislike the bird above all others, for his idleness. But when winter approaches, and the cold wind blows, what becomes of him then? Want will teach him better thrift."

But Conrad interrupted him, saying: "Be not afraid. Do not you know that people say he becomes a rapacious kite in winter?" *

"Ah!" said Paul, "then he is like young John. His parents let him grow up in idleness, and after his father's death he joined a band of robbers."

* It is a common saying, at least in some parts of Westphalia, that the cuckoo is changed into a kite in winter.

"And in the end," continued Conrad, "he had the same fate as the kite on my barn-door."

Conversing in such manner, the two farmers surveyed their blooming and fertile fields.

THE BITTER FLOWERET.

ONE morning in spring, a mother went out with her little daughter into the mountains; on their walk the girl rejoiced at the abundance of flowers and herbs which bloomed by the way-side.

One flower she liked better than all the others; it was small and delicate, of a beautiful rose-colour. Minna—this was the little girl's name—picked the flower and looked at it with delight, kissed it and smelt it and praised it incessantly.

But she soon became tired of this; she wanted to derive more pleasure from the little flower, and put it in her mouth to eat it.

And what was the consequence? Minna came running to her mother, weeping and crying: "O dear mamma! the flower was so lovely, and looked so pretty, and I was tempted to eat it; but it tastes so bitter that it quite draws my mouth! Oh, fie on the nasty ugly flowers!"

Thus spoke the little maiden. But her mother answered and said: "My dear child, why do you abuse the flowers? They are just as pretty and rosy and odoriferous as before! Is that not much, and quite enough? You know flowers are not made to be eaten."

POLYCARP; OR, THE KINGDOM OF TRUTH.

THE excellent Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was obliged to quit the city in consequence of the increasing persecutions; he went with his faithful disciple Crescens to the region in the vicinity of Smyrna.

And in the cool of the evening the bishop was walking under the shade of the magnificent trees which stood in front of his rural abode. Here he found Crescens sitting under an oak-tree, leaning his head on his hand and weeping. Then the old man said: "My son, why weepest thou?" Crescens lifted up his head, and said: "Shall I not mourn and weep, when I think of the kingdom of truth on earth? Tempests and storms are gathering round, and will destroy it in its beginning. Many of its adherents have become apostates, and have denied and abused the truth, proving that unworthy men may confess it with their lips, though their heart is far from it. This fills my soul with sorrow, and my eyes with tears." Thus replied Crescens.

Then Polycarp smiled, and answered: "My dear son, the kingdom of divine truth is like unto a tree that a countryman reared in his garden. He set the seed secretly and quietly in the ground, and left it; the seed put forth leaves, and the young tree grew up among weeds and thorns. Soon the tree reared itself above them, and the



weeds died, because the shadow of the branches overcame them. The tree grew, and the winds blew on it and shook it; but its roots clung firmer and firmer to the ground, taking hold of the rocks downwards, and its branches reached unto heaven. Thus the tempest served to increase the firmness and strength of the tree. When it grew up higher, and its shadow spread further, then the thorns and the weeds grew again around the tree; but it heeded them not in its loftiness: there it stood in calm, peaceful grandeur—a tree of God.”

Thus said the excellent bishop; then stretching out his hand to his disciple, he continued, smiling: “When thou art lifting up thy eyes to the summit of the tree, wilt thou regard the weeds that cling about its roots? Trust in Him who planted it.”

Then Crescens arose, and his heart was gladdened; for the venerable father walked by his side. Bent was he with years; but his spirit and his countenance were as those of a youth.



THE CANARY-BIRD.

A LITTLE girl, called Caroline, had a charming canary-bird. The little creature sang from morning to night, and was very pretty, of a bright yellow colour, with a black crest. Caroline gave it seeds to eat, and nice fresh herbs; sometimes also a piece of sugar, and fresh clear water every day.

But suddenly the little bird began to pine; and one morning, when Caroline was going to give it water, it lay dead at the bottom of the cage.

Then the little girl raised a loud lamentation for her darling bird, and wept bitterly. To console her, her mother bought another bird, one more beautiful than the first, and that could sing just as sweetly, and put it into the cage.

But the little girl wept still more when she saw the new bird.

Then her mother was surprised, and said: "My dear child, why do you cry still, and mourn? Your tears will not recall the dead bird to life; and here is another for you, which is just as pretty."

Then the child said: "Alas, my dear mamma, I have done wrong towards the little creature; I have not done everything for it that I ought to have done."

"My dear Caroline," answered the mother, "you always took great care of the bird."

"Ah, no!" replied the child; "a short time before its death, I myself ate the piece of sugar which you had given me for the bird."

Thus said the little girl, with sorrowful voice.

The mother did not smile at the complaints of Caroline, for she knew and respected the holy voice of conscience in the heart of the child.

"Ah," said she, "such may be the feelings of the ungrateful child by the grave of his parents!"

THE PEACHES.

A COUNTRYMAN brought from town five of the finest peaches that were to be had. His children had never seen this fruit; therefore they were highly delighted to see the beautiful apples with their red cheeks and delicate bloom. The father divided them among his four boys, and gave one to their mother. In the evening, when the children were going into the little bed-room, he asked them: "Well, how did you like the nice apples?"

"Very much indeed, dear father," said the eldest boy. "It is a delicious fruit, of so luscious and delicate a flavour. I have taken care of the stone, and mean to grow a tree." "Well done!" answered the father; "it is the duty of a countryman to be economical, and to think of the future."

"I ate mine up directly," exclaimed the youngest: "and I threw the stone away, and mother gave me half of hers. Oh, how sweet it was—how it melts in one's mouth!"

"Well," said the father, "you have not done very wisely; but at all events like a child. You have still time enough in life to become prudent."

Then the second son began: "I picked up the stone which my little brother threw away, and opened it. There was a kernel inside, as sweet as an almond; but I sold my own peach, and received so much money for it, that I may buy a dozen when I go to town."

The father shook his head, and said: "That is cleverly done, but not like a child. Heaven preserve thee from

becoming a trader! And you, Edmund?" asked the father.

Edmund answered frankly: "I took my peach to the son of our neighbour, sick George, who has the fever. He would not take it, so I put it down on his bed and went away."

"Well," said the father; "who has made the best use of his peach?" Then all the boys exclaimed: "Brother Edmund!" Edmund was silent—and his mother embraced him with tears in her eyes.

THE WINE.

ON the fertile island of Chios lived in ancient times a noble and generous man, who had come from Asia, and built himself a house not far from the sea-coast. On the sunny hills he had planted grapes, the delicious fruit of his native country. The vines prospered beyond his expectation, and yielded the rich wine called the *wine of Chios*, the best which Greece and the islands produce.

The man, whose name was Philon, was pious, and loved mankind; and he thought how he might show his gratitude to the Supreme Being, who fertilises the earth and nourishes man, for the delicious gift of wine, and the blessing of the grape. Then he said: "He has been merciful to me, and gladdened my heart; I will do good unto men, and make them glad. That is the best way to show my gratitude to the Being who himself lacketh nought."



Thus he spake, and thus he did, showing charity to the sick and the sorrowing round about, and doing good to the strangers who came to him.

And the sick and the mourners praised the healing strength of the wine, saying: "It is a gift of God." But still higher they extolled the goodness and benevolence of the man, for they said: "He is a man of God."

One day there arose a tempest, and the sea roared and foamed. Far off a ship was seen toiling against the wind and the waves, and the sailors were frightened by the hurricane. Philon stood on the beach, and was filled with anxiety and compassion; for the storm increased, and drove the ship towards the island, to a part where there were many hidden rocks in the sea. Suddenly the ship was thrown on the cliffs, and she split, and was swallowed by the angry waves.

The sailors saved themselves on boards, and the billows threw them on the beach. All escaped unhurt except the captain and the steersman, who were wounded and bruised, because the waves had dashed them against the rocks.

Then Philon ordered them to be carried to his house, poured wine and oil into their wounds, and refreshed them with the best and oldest wine he had. Then they began to recover, and slept; for the wine strengthened and refreshed them.

And Philon said to the sailors: "Go ye also to my house, that you may receive refreshments." Then he ordered his servants to set bread and wine before them;—and they did accordingly. Now Philon led the passengers from the ship, travelling disciples of the wise Pythagoras, into his garden

under the shade of the lemon and palm trees, and made a banquet of wine, — and when their hearts were warmed, they began to speak of God, of the high calling of man, and of the immortality of the soul; they sang hymns, and their souls united in friendship, as the juice of the various grapes unites to form a delicious drink. Thus they sat with the crowned goblets in their hands till the evening-star rose above their heads.

Suddenly a great noise was heard from the house, and the din of many voices. Philon and the learned men ran to see what was amiss, but on entering they were terrified. The strength of the wine had inflamed the rude sailors, and they began a terrible fight. They had damaged the house, and broken the furniture of the benevolent man, and changed the drinking-vessels into deadly weapons. The ground was stained with the blood of the killed and wounded, and the house echoed with the shouts of the combatants.

Then Philon was wroth, and said: "You evil-doers, is this your gratitude for my kindness, that you desecrate so infamously the delicious wine? Go back to the floods of the sea, which you resemble, and which cast you out. You are not worthy to live under my roof, and to enjoy the precious gift of God." Thus he said, and cast them out in the dark night; but the others he took in, and made a feast for them, and raising the sparkling goblet, he said: "We will not reproach the noble gift of God with the evil consequences brought on by the sinful excess of brutish men. Even the sun, which ripens the grape, and whose



lustre beams from its gold, engenders the pernicious miasma when he darts his rays on corruption."

Thus also did men misuse the heavenly wisdom which was given them for consolation and enjoyment, making it cause misery and shedding of blood. But to the wise and gentle it is a tree of life.



DEATH AND SLEEP.

THE angel of sleep and the angel of death wandered in fraternal unity over the world. It was evening. They rested on a hill not far from the habitations of man. A placid calmness prevailed everywhere; even the sound of the curfew ceased in the distant hamlet.

Calmly and silently, as is their wont, the two beneficent angels of mankind held each other embraced, until night approached. Then the angel of sleep arose from his mossy seat and strewed with noiseless hand the invisible seeds of slumber.

The evening breeze carried them to the quiet dwellings of the tired country people, and sweet sleep descended on the dwellers in their rural huts, from the old man with his

crutch to the babe in the cradle. The sick once more forgot their pains, the troubled soul her grief, and poverty her cares ; for every eye was closed.

Now, his task being done, the beneficent angel of sleep returned to his graver brother. "When the light of morning arises," he exclaimed with innocent joy, "then mankind will praise me as their friend and benefactor. What a blessing to do good in secret! How happy are we, the invisible messengers of the good Spirit! How beautiful our silent calling!" Thus spoke the gentle angel of sleep.

The angel of death gazed at him with a look of soft melancholy, and a tear, such as immortal beings shed, glistened in his large dark eye. "Alas!" said he, "would that I could enjoy cheerful gratitude like thee! The world calls me her enemy and disturber!"

"O my brother," replied the angel of sleep, "will not, at the awakening, the good man acknowledge thee as his friend and benefactor, and gratefully bless thee? Are we not brethren and messengers of one Father?"

When he spoke thus, the eye of the angel of death glistened brightly, and the fraternal spirits embraced with renewed tenderness.





LIFE AND DEATH.

DORA was a pious, lovely girl. All who knew her loved her, but particularly her brother Edmund, a little boy, of whom she was equally fond. Suddenly Dora fell sick, and Edmund was extremely sad, because of her sufferings. But it never entered into his head that she might die, for he had never seen a corpse, and knew not yet what *death* and *dying* meant.

While Dora lay full of pain on her sick-bed, Edmund thought what might afford her pleasure, and he went into

the fields to gather flowers, for he knew that she loved them dearly.

But while he was absent Dora died, and they clothed her in a white shroud.

Then Edmund entered the chamber where she lay. He showed her the flowers as he entered; but the little maiden did not look up. Then he exclaimed: "Look, Dora, what I have brought for you!" But she did not hear. Now Edmund approached, looked at his sister, and said: "She sleeps. I will put down the flowers on her bosom, that she may rejoice when she wakes. Then she will say: Edmund has done that!"

Softly he did so, and smiled. Then he went to his mother, and said: "I have been gathering flowers for Dora such as she loves best. But she sleeps. I have put the flowers on her bosom, that she may rejoice when she wakes."

But the mother wept, and said: "Yes, she sleeps, but she will wake no more."

Then Edmund said: "If she sleeps, why should she not awake?"

Thus spake the boy. But the mother could not answer him; for she covered her face to conceal her tears.

The boy was astonished, and said: "Mother, why weep-est thou?"

ÆSOP.

ÆSOP, the incomparable composer of pleasing tales of animals and plants, was severely beaten by his hard master, and driven into the wilderness. "Oh, the unhappy man!" exclaimed one of his fellow-slaves, when he was cast out by his master.

"Unhappy!" cried Æsop; "why am I more unhappy than thou?"

"What happiness or pleasure canst thou find in the wilderness?" replied the slave.

"Liberty!" answered the man of Phrygia; and they drove him out.

A few days after, some people who knew him went to bury his remains, for they believed that he would have ended his miserable existence by a voluntary death. But they found Æsop sitting cheerfully under a tree. They were surprised, and told him why they had come. Then he smiled, and told them the fable of the woodcutter and Death; and they asked: "What could induce the poor miserable woodcutter not to follow Death?"

Æsop answered: "The love of life, and the hardness of his horny hand."

Then one of them said: "Æsop, we are indeed surprised at thy serenity and gaiety. Nature has denied thee every thing that may gladden man's heart; thy body is frail, thou canst hardly breathe with ease; thy face is ugly, men

mock at thee as soon as they see thee, and will not even have thee for their slave; and now thou art driven to this desert place: what recompense did the gods give thee?"

Æsop answered: "They bestowed on me a part of their divine nature. They taught me to understand the language of animals, and gave me the power to make them speak."

"Thou speakest of thy wisdom," began another, "and seemest to aver that Nature supplies the want of one gift by bestowing another; if it were so, the fool would fly from himself, or curse Nature as soon as he looks upon his inward soul."

Æsop answered: "He regards only the exterior, and to indemnify him he received the deceiving blossom of foolishness—conceit."

They departed from the light-hearted man with admiration, but before they left him they asked him: "Dost thou purpose to spend thy life in this wilderness, and thus to bury the treasures of thy wisdom and experience?"

Æsop answered: "By no means; I shall go where people are most in want of truth and wisdom."

"And where is that?" asked they.

He said: "Where the greatest number of priests, temples, and altars are to be found." And he wandered to Delphi.

However, he had not been long in Delphi when the priests raised a persecution against him, because he spoke the truth fearlessly. They accused him of sacrilege, and threw him into a dark dungeon. But even there the little Phrygian man was merry and cheerful, to the great surprise



of the gaoler, who asked him: "How in the world canst thou be so merry-hearted in this dreary prison?"

Æsop answered; "Because I am contented with myself."

Some time after, the priests fetched him from the dungeon to precipitate him from the rock of Phrædria. With serene countenance he went on his last way. Then a man from the multitude asked him: "From whence comes thy strength, that thy courage and thy cheerfulness do not forsake thee on the verge of the grave?"

Æsop answered: "From a conscience void of offence, and the purity of my past life."

Then they cast him from the rock, and he gave up the ghost.

ANNA AND SHULAMITH.

In the land of Israel, at the foot of Mount Tabor, lived a widow named Anna, with her only daughter Shulamith. They were very poor and lived in a little hut, but their hearts were cheerful and contented, and their lives passed peaceably, for they were pious and feared God. Anna instructed her child in all that is good, telling Shulamith how God makes all plants to grow out of the ground, sending the dew upon them, and making the sun rise over all living creatures, and how many blessings he gives to

mankind every day; and she taught her from the holy Scriptures many histories and sublime doctrines. When she was speaking thus to her daughter, tears often came into her eyes. Then Shulamith said to her mother Anna: "Mother, why weepest thou?"

And the mother smiled, saying: "O my child, His love and mercy are too great for man to attain unto them."

Thus they were wont to converse, and their doings were like unto their sayings. God blessed them, and their little garden brought forth different kinds of fruit, and the trees also which surrounded their humble dwelling, so that they were able to communicate to others, and give to the sick and poor of their abundance.

Then said Anna: "Dost thou see, Shulamith, that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Happy are we that we may give our mite, and that none turneth away, refusing it with disdain."

Thus they lived cheerfully and contentedly in their little hut, and they garnished it, cultivating their garden with industrious hand.

But behold, an evil plague spread over the land; Anna caught the infection, and suffered greatly, and Shulamith fell sick from grief and anxiety.

When the mother felt the approach of death, she said, with smiling face and gentle voice, "My dear child, my hour is come; nevertheless, do not despair, but be comforted. The good Father in Heaven will order all things for the best." When she had spoken thus, she could proceed no further, for her strength failed her.

Shulamith wept bitterly, and kneeling down she lifted

up her hands, and prayed: "O good Father in Heaven, do not take my own dear mother away. What should I do without her?" Thus little Shulamith prayed, and angels carried the prayer of innocence before the throne of the Almighty. Now the day dawned, the sun rose, and the rosy light of a new morning filled the chamber with its gentle rays. Shulamith clung to the bosom of her mother. And behold, the angel of death descended on the golden beams of the morning, and the souls of Anna and Shulamith took their flight in the glory of morn to the better world.



SAMUEL AND ELI; OR, THE FIRST BLUSH.

THE boy Samuel ministered unto the Lord at Shiloh before Eli the priest, and found favour with God and men; for he served the Lord in singleness of heart, and was obedient, and increased in wisdom.

But the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked lads, who cared not for the Lord, and their sins were very great. One day they stood under a tree before the house of their father Eli, and the boy Samuel was with them, girded with a linen ephod.

Then Hophni and Phinehas spoke wicked, shameless words to each other, and Samuel heard them, and blushed deeply, so that his countenance glowed like the setting sun. Thus the boy blushed for the first time, for he had never

before heard a wicked word spoken by any one. But the wicked lads scoffed at him, and held him in derision, because he blushed at their words; and Samuel turned himself away and wept.

Eli, who had heard all that had happened, came to the boy, and said: "My son, why weepest thou?"

Then answered Samuel: "Thy sons Hophni and Phinehas spoke wickedly before me; then my heart was moved, and it came like fire over my face, and they derided me."

Then Eli embraced the boy Samuel, and lifted up his voice, saying: "Alas! my son, weep not, and let not their mockery move thee. Thou art the chosen one of the Lord; but what delights me in thee, fills my soul with grief for my own children,—for if they themselves destroy the flower, how can they ever bring forth fruit?"

And Eli wept for his sons, until his eyes were darkened; however, they did not cease to grieve his soul. But Samuel gladdened the heart of Eli the priest, and walked uprightly before the Lord.



THE SHEPHERD OF THE PEOPLE.

SAMUEL, the judge in Israel, was troubled concerning Saul, whom he had anointed king,—for he did evil and governed the people ill. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "How long wilt thou be grieved for Saul? Behold, his dominion is at an end. Go to the sons of

Jesse, and choose one who is worthy to be a shepherd of the people."

And Samuel went towards Bethlehem, and saw the sons of Jesse, and was about to choose Eliab, for Eliab was fair to look upon and of great stature. But the Spirit of the Lord prevented him, saying: "Man looks upon the form, but the Lord seeth the heart."

Then Samuel was troubled, and tried to search the hearts of the sons of Jesse, that he might choose the worthiest. And he asked Jesse: "Are these all thy sons?" Jesse answered: "There is still the youngest, and behold he keepeth the flocks in the mountains."

Then Samuel thought: "I will prove his mind and his heart before he comes here, that I may give a worthy leader to the people." And he went into the mountains and hid himself in a cave, while David kept the sheep.

Behold, there came a lion and a bear from the mountains, and the lion carried away a sheep from the flock. But the youth sprang forth, seized the lion by the beard, and rescued the sheep from his jaws, and slew him; and to the bear he did likewise.

Then Samuel was astonished at the strength and courage of the youth, and he marvelled; but he still hesitated and doubted in his heart, saying: "I have indeed seen the courage and strength of the youth, but the Lord seeth the heart."

So he still looked on. Behold, the ruddy shepherd sat down by the hill, took his flute from his scrip, and played before the sheep. His dog lay beside him, the breeze played with his locks, and the lambs crowded round their

shepherd. So he sat in the midst of them, playing his flute, and when he ceased, the sheep came to him licking his hand and his crook, and lay down at his feet.

Then Samuel doubted no more, but cried, "The Lord hath blessed me; for I have found a man chosen to be the shepherd of men,—for both strength and mildness are in him."

And the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying: "Go and anoint him; him have I chosen."



THE LIGHT OF HOME.

A TRAVELLER was hastening from a distant land to his native country. His heart was filled with hope and joy, for he had not seen his parents and brothers for many years; therefore he hurried greatly. But when he was on the mountains, night overtook him, and it was so dark that he could hardly see the staff in his hand. When he came down into the valley, he lost his way, and wandered a long time to the right and to the left; then he was very sad, and sighed—"Oh! would that a human being might meet me to relieve me in this trouble, and bring me on the right way! how grateful should I be!" Thus he said and stopped, waiting for a guide.

As the way-worn pilgrim was standing there full of doubts and anxiety, behold a twinkling light gleamed from afar through the darkness, and its glimmer seemed lovely to him in the dark night. "Welcome," he exclaimed,

"thou messenger of peace,—thou givest me the assurance that a human being is nigh. Thy faint gleam through the darkness of night is sweet to me as the sunrise."

He hastened to reach the distant light, fancying that he saw the man who was carrying it. But lo, it was a will-o'-the-wisp rising from a fen and hovering over the stagnant pool; thus the man drew nigh to the verge of destruction.

Suddenly a voice behind him exclaimed; "Stop; or thou art a dead man!" He stopped and looked around; it was a fisherman, who called to him from his boat.

"Why," asked he, "shall I not follow the kindly guiding light? I have lost my way."

"The guiding light!" said the fisherman; "callest thou thus the deluding glimmer which draws the wanderer into danger and destruction? Evil subterranean powers create from the noisome bogs the nightly vapour which imitates the glimmer of the friendly light. Behold how restlessly it flutters about, the evil offspring of night and darkness."

While he thus spoke, the deceptive light vanished. After it had expired, the weary traveller thanked the fisherman heartily for preserving him; and the fisherman answered and said: "Should one man leave another in error, and not help him into the right way? We have both reason to thank God: I, that he made me the instrument to do the good; thou, that I was ordained to be at this hour in my boat on the water."

Then the good-natured fisherman left his boat, accompanied the traveller for a while, and brought him on the right way to reach his father's house. Now he walked on cheerily, and soon the light of home gleamed through the

trees with its quiet modest radiance, appearing to him doubly welcome after the troubles and dangers he had undergone. He knocked; the door was opened, and his father and mother, brothers and sisters came to meet him, and hung on his neck and kissed him, weeping for joy.

THE JEWEL.

A ROUGH jewel lay for many years hid in the dust among a number of other common stones; many a one passed it by or trod it under foot, without picking it up. Its lustre was concealed from the eye of the wanderer; for the truly beautiful appears not in pride, but in simplicity.

At last a friend of nature came to that region; he was in search of flowers and insects, and found the jewel. Smiling, he examined the stone, and said, "How art thou always kind to thy adorer, sweet Nature! Even if he should not find what he sought with zeal and singleness of purpose, he will not fail to discover something well worth the seeking."

He took the stone home. "But," said he, "simple child of Nature, what must I do to perfect thee? How must I take away the coarse covering which hides thy lustre? But what is precious in itself can only be improved by precious elements." He polished the diamond with dia-



mond powder; then it shone with incomparable splendour, and its fame spread throughout all the country

The wise friend of Nature took the perfected jewel and brought it to the good and beloved prince of the land, and said: "I found this noblest product of nature, and called forth its lustre; now I offer it to the chief of the land, that it may adorn his crown; for it is chosen to be the highest ornament of royal diadems."

And the prince asked: "What is the highest ornament of the throne?"

The wise man answered: "What the diamond is to the crown, that is a circle of the noblest men to the throne which they surround, and to the prince who honours them."



THE BEE AND THE BUTTERFLY.

A BEE-KEEPER took a young friend to his bee-hives, and called his attention to the wonderful activity of the little nation. In the meantime a splendid butterfly flitted by. The lustre of gold, the pure azure of the sky, and the roseate tints of the evening light, seemed blended in its large wings. It rested for an instant on a flower, and fluttered on.

"What a beautiful creature!" exclaimed the bee-keeper; "and yet it was developed from a creeping caterpillar." Then his friend was surprised, and said: "I thought you



bee-keepers cared only for your bee-hives, and that you overlooked the other gifts of nature."

"Friend," answered the bee-keeper; "it is not merely self-interest, or the gain which the bees yield me, that makes me love them. Mean inclinations alone harden the heart of man, making him narrow-minded and partial. But the more fervently he loves nature, the more his heart will expand, and his eye be opened to every beauty, and every good and perfect gift around him."

"But," continued his friend, "the most beautiful butterfly may not be compared to the busy, useful bee."

Then the bee-keeper pointed to the teeming hives, and said to his young friend: "*Here* you see the image of active life in its narrow limits; the spirit confined by its terrestrial action: *there* the image of the perfect spirit in its liberation, and in its elevation above the dust. Therefore the imaginative sculptors and poets of ancient times adorn the enfranchised developed soul with the wings of a butterfly."

"Indeed a beautiful image and parallel," replied the other; "but could not Nature combine the beautiful with the useful?"

Then the bee-keeper answered with some displeasure: "Must the high and the spiritual be always chained to earth, and the celestial be drawn down to terrestrial aims? That would be to degrade its divine nature."

LAZARUS.

WHEN the Lord had awakened his beloved Lazarus from the sleep of death, the newly-risen man was like unto one who has been roused from a morning dream. He looked around and gazed on the grave-clothes, which had been taken off from him.

When they had entered the house, and were rejoicing among themselves, Mary approached her beloved brother with a smile, and asked: "Why gazedst thou so thoughtfully on the grave-clothes, before thou didst leave the darksome cave where thou hadst slept? The glance of thine eye was peculiar, and full of meaning."

Then Lazarus answered: "Mary, I was like one in a dream; I knew not that my soul had returned to life, but I seemed to quit the earth, and to ascend to another world."

"But," said Mary, "how could the grave-clothes and the napkin attract thy gaze?"

Lazarus answered: "They seemed to be the earthly garment of my spirit, which in the ardent feeling of a newly awakened life, I imagined to have put off."

"How?" said Mary, "thou didst believe thy resurrection to life to be the dissolution by the hand of death?"

Then the young man smiled, and said: "Thou sayest it. Are not both one, Mary?"

HAGAR.

WHEN Hagar was cast forth from Abraham's dwelling with her boy Ishmael, she wandered to and fro in the wilderness of Beersheba;—and the pitcher of water which Abraham had given her on the way was empty. Now the child suffered greatly from thirst, and wailed bitterly, and nowhere was a spring or well to be found.

Hagar wept, and said: "Alas, will the Lord forget the innocent child? I will die willingly, if the Lord have but mercy on the boy."

Then she laid the boy under a tree, and sat down at a distance; for she said: "I cannot see the child die!" and she lifted up her voice and wept.

Then the Lord God heard the voice of the boy, and opened Hagar's eyes that she saw a spring of water; then she went and filled the bottle, and refreshed the boy.

And Hagar was comforted, and said: "The Lord regardeth the tears of innocence and love; and when need is sorest, his help is nearest."

THE TULIP-TREE.

A GARDENER once visited another man, who was a gardener like himself, and had reared many rare flowers and trees. They began to talk of different plants, natives



of other lands, which grow and blossom in colder climes; they called them by their strange, peculiar names, which not every man can pronounce and retain. They went into the garden, contemplating the various plants, and conversing.

Then the strange gardener related that he had grown a tree, different from all others, called the tulip-tree, because its flower resembled a tulip; it was indigenous to a far-distant country, and could not be compared to any other tree. Thus he praised the tulip-tree exceedingly.

Then there arose in the heart of the other gardener an ardent desire to possess such a tree, and he offered his friend the best trees from his garden if he would send him a tulip-tree. And the first went and sent the tree.

Now when the tulip-tree began to bloom and put forth buds, the gardener was filled with joy, and talked everywhere of his tree, saying, that it would soon bring forth tulips. Moreover, the gardener and his friend believed that the tree would present a most magnificent sight, bearing flowers of gorgeous colours, with bright yellow and crimson stripes, and resembling a choice bed of tulips of a thousand hues; for the other gardener had praised the tree exceedingly.

Thus they waited impatiently, and the hours and days passed slowly for them until the buds opened.

At length it bloomed; but the gardener and his friends were not aware of it, because they imagined the form of the flower would be a different one. When they, however, perceived that it was the blossom indeed, they esteemed its beauty very little, for it was simple and modest; but they



were offended and very angry, and destroyed secretly all the flowers and buds, that they might not be held in derision by other people for their boasting.

Thus this story happened ; and we are to learn from it neither to praise nor exalt the unknown nor our friends beyond measure. For man is by nature discontented, demanding that the *good* should be the *best*, and the *beautiful* the *perfection* of beauty ; and if his expectations are not gratified, he is wroth, and despises the good and the beautiful, because it is not the most beautiful and the best.



J O B .

IN the time of Job there dwelt in the land of Uz a prophet of the Lord named Eliud. Joram, Job's friend, came to him, and said : "The ways of the Lord are unsearchable ; but why must the righteous suffer so much ? Behold Job has lost all that was his ; his children have fallen the victims of death, and they who ought to comfort him, weary him with reproaches and bitter words ; moreover, he is smitten with disease, and covered with sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

"The hand of the Lord is upon him," answered the prophet.

"And yet," continued Joram, "Job is pious, and feareth

God more than any in the land. Did he not save the oppressed, who cried unto him, and the orphan, who had no helper? Was he not a father to the poor, as an eye to the blind, and as a foot to the lame? Righteousness was his garment, and whosoever saw him, praised him and called him blessed."

"Blessed is the man whom the Almighty chasteneth," answered the prophet.

"Is not the Almighty also the All-merciful? Why should he be chastened who so lovingly turned the gifts of God into blessings for others, and walked righteously before all the world?"

"That he might be found faithful before God," answered the prophet.

"What more could Job bring as a sacrifice unto him?"

"The hardest and most precious," answered the prophet, "HIS WILL."

THE PINKS.

"O DEAR mother, give each of us a flower-bed; me one, and Gustavus one, and Alvina one,—and each will take care of his own." Thus said little Frederick to his mother, who granted his request, and gave each child a flower-bed, planted with fine pinks. The children were overjoyed, and said: "How splendid it will look when the pinks are in

bloom !” For it was not yet the season for pinks, they had only put forth their little buds.

Little Frederick, however, was too impatient to await the time of their blooming ; and he wished that his flower-bed might be in blossom before all others.

He took the buds in his hand, looking at their green covers, and rejoicing when he saw a yellow or red petal peeping forth here or there. But he could not wait patiently : Frederick opened the buds and unfolded the petals altogether ; then he exclaimed with a loud voice, “ Look, my pinks are in bloom ! ”

But when the sun shone on them the flowers drooped their heads, and before noon they all looked mournful, faded, and torn.

Then the boy cried about his flowers ; but his mother said, “ Impatient child ! may this be the last pleasure of your life that you mar by your own fault ; then you will not have bought too dearly the great and difficult art of WAITING PATIENTLY.”





THE LAMBS.

It was a calm, clear, summer evening; a mother was sitting in her bedroom by the side of her sweet babe's cradle, lulling him to sleep with a song.

Then the little Adelaide came in from the garden with beaming eyes. "O dear mother!" exclaimed she, "come, there is something very beautiful to see."

"Well, what is it?" asked her mother.

"Oh, something very beautiful indeed," replied the little girl; "but you must come yourself and see."

"I should like very much to do so," answered her mother kindly, "but I cannot leave your little brother."

Then the little maiden cried coaxingly, saying, "Dear mother, take my little brother with you, that he may see it too, and rejoice at it."

And the mother thought of the simplicity of childhood, which loves not to enjoy any thing alone, but would share all with others. "Oh!" said she to herself, "thy soul is yet nigh to the kingdom of heaven; how could I refuse any longer?"

She rose and looked into the cradle; the little boy slept calmly and soundly. Then she took the hand of her joyful daughter, and said, "I wonder what beautiful things you are going to show me."

When they were in the garden the little girl pointed to the sky, and exclaimed: "Now look, dear mother, there are little lambs of heaven,—a whole flock: are they not dear and lovely?"

They were delicate fleecy clouds, scattered on the blue sky like lambs on a green pasture; and they glanced white and clear in the rays of the bright full moon.

The mother of the child lifted up her countenance and gazed on the clouds with chastened delight, for she remembered how childish innocence invests terrestrial things with celestial beauty, and knows not of the gulf which separates heaven and earth. Thus Adelaide saw the lambs of earth in the clouds of heaven.

"O blessed art thou!" thought the mother, and pressed the little girl to her bosom.



THE FAVOURITE FLOWERS.

GUSTAVUS, Hermann, and Alvina, the blooming children of a country gentleman, were walking in the fields one fine morning in spring. The nightingales and larks were singing, and the dewy flowers opened amid the dew to the mild rays of the morning sun.

The children looked joyfully around, roaming from one hill to the other, weaving wreaths of flowers. They sang hymns to spring, and praised the love of the Almighty Father who decks the earth with grass and flowers; they sang about the flowers, from the rose that grows on the bush, to the violet which blooms in secret, and the heather whereon the bee sucks.

Thus the spring-time of life, and the spring-time of the year, appeared together in sweet harmony.

Now the children said among themselves: "Let each of us choose a flower, to be our favourite before all others."

And they were delighted with the idea, and ran merrily into the field to search for the favourite flowers. "There, in that arbour, we will meet again!" they exclaimed.

Thus the little ones started in unity on their different ways to gather the beautiful children of spring.

Soon they appeared on the way to the arbour, each carrying a rich nosegay of their chosen flowers. When they perceived each other, they held up their treasures, and shouted with joy. Then they met in the arbour, and said: "Now each of us must tell why he has chosen his flower."

Gustavus, the eldest, had selected the violet. "Look," said he, "it blooms in modest simplicity among moss and grass, and sends forth its sweet odours secretly and gently like the silent coming and blessings of spring. But men honour and love it, praising it in beautiful songs; and every one collects a little nosegay when coming from the field, and calls the violet the first-born child of spring, and the emblem of modesty; therefore I chose it for my favourite."

Thus said Gustavus, and offered some of his flowers to Hermann and Alvina, who received them with delight, for they were the chosen favourites of their brother.

Now Hermann produced his bouquet, — the delicate lily of the valley, which grows under the cool shade of the forest, her flowers resembling a string of pearls, pure and white as the daylight. "See," said he, "I have chosen this flower; for it is the emblem of innocence and purity, and reminds me also of the love of Him who adorns the heavens with stars, and the earth with flowers. Was not the lily deemed worthy before all other flowers of the field to bear witness of the fatherly love of Him in whom we all live and have our being? Therefore I have chosen the little lily for my favourite."

Thus said Hermann, and he offered his flowers; the two others received them with reverent joy, for to them the flower was now sacred.

Now Alvina, the gentle, lovely girl, also brought what she had gathered. It was the tender blue forget-me-not. "Look, my dear brothers," said the fair girl, "these flowers I found by the brook. Do they not shine like a bright star



in heaven, reflected in the clear water by the side of which they grow? The rivulet seems more beautiful when surrounded and enwreathed by these flowers. It is the flower of love and tenderness; therefore I chose it for my favourite, and give it to both of you."

Then she offered it to her brothers with a kiss, and her brothers thanked her by a kiss; and the guardian angels of the children looked smilingly upon the lovely union of innocence. Thus the favourite flowers were chosen. Then Alvina said: "Let us make two wreaths of them, and take them to our dear parents."

They bound two wreaths of the beautiful flowers, took them to their parents, and related to them all that they had been doing, and how the flowers had been chosen. Then the parents were pleased with their good children, and said, "A lovely garland! Love, innocence, and modesty intertwined! Behold, how one flower heightens the other; so that, united, they form the most beautiful crown."

"But one thing is wanting," answered the children; and crowned their father and mother with gratitude and emotion.

Then their parents rejoiced, and embraced them fervently, and said, "Such a crown is more noble than a royal diadem!"

THE ROSEBUD.

A BOY was standing by a rose-bush covered with buds and blooming roses; blithely and busily he looked now at a rose, now at a petal, now at a bud. His father watched him from a distance, as he stood in a shady bower; and his eye rested with fervent love and devotion on the darling of his heart.

"Is it not," said he to himself, "as though a prophetic voice were speaking to me from the rose-bush, predicting by its buds and flowers, that paternal joys will bloom for me in the child? Or what makes him so fair and so dear to me, as he stands beside the blooming rose-bush?"

Thus said the father, while the son continued to gaze and to examine; for admiration of the beautiful rouses the desire of knowledge.

He wished to discover how the bud is developed into a rose. He folded his arms on his chest, and looked steadfastly at a bud. The father smiled.

Thus higher beings may smile when they perceive a philosopher of this world fixing his eye, aided by a microscope, on a star, or the interior construction of a glow-worm.

The boy soon found out that his watching was in vain. Now he picked a bud, opened it, and examined the inside with profound attention. Then his father approached.

"What are you thinking about so seriously, my child?" asked he. "O father," said the little boy, "I should like to know how the bud becomes a rose, therefore I picked and opened it; but I see nothing but little leaves, shrivelled and full of wrinkles: I wish I had not broken it!"

"Never mind, my child," replied the father, "Nature has given abundance. She did not only provide for our wants, but also for our pleasure and our curiosity. Thou hast learned at least, that it is not easy to penetrate into her mysteries."

"But I am not wiser now," said the boy.

"Perhaps not," answered the father; "but you had the sincere wish to learn. A good intention is good in itself. The success does not always depend upon man; and even if he succeeds, the good intention is always the best in whatever he does."

After a little while the boy said, modestly: "Will you tell me, my dear father, how the bud becomes a flower?"

Then the father answered: "My dear child, I can merely tell you in three words what happens: the bud increases in *size*, *beauty*, and *grace*, till it reaches its perfection. Beyond that I know no more than you! Nature gives us the beautiful in perfection, but she hides the hand which produces and offers it."

Then the boy took the bud which he had picked again in his hand, and said to his father: "If the bud makes itself so beautiful, more beautiful than any thing that man can make, how is it that it cannot defend itself against the feeble hand of a child? Why is it able to do so much in the one case, and so little in the other?"

‘Do you think that the bud forms and makes itself, William?’ asked the father, looking with serene gravity at the boy.

“Oh, to be sure,” answered the boy, “the flowers have like me a mother and a father, who bring them up and take care of them!”

“One Father of us all!” replied the father with emotion; “we do not see Him, but we feel His power and His love in and around us!”

Thus he spoke, and the boy’s heart was touched, for his father had dropped a jewel into his soul. From henceforth he regarded the rose-bush and the flowers of the field as congenial beings, and he increased in age, wisdom, and grace.

The father kept the child’s saying in his heart, and related it to the affectionate mother of the boy. “How clearly is the sublimest of truths revealed to an innocent and simple mind!” said the mother.





THE ROSE.

"'Tis a pity," said a boy to his father, "that the rose does not bring forth a fruit after having bloomed, to return thanks to Nature in summer for the beauteous days of its bloom in spring, for bestowing so much beauty on her! You called her the flower of innocence and joy; then she would be also the image of gratitude."

Then the father answered: "Does she not give herself entirely to beautify spring? And for the dew and the rays of light which descend on her from above, she offers up

her sweet odours; created for spring, she dies with it. My dear child, modest, unobtrusive gratitude is certainly the sweetest; and how could innocence be ungrateful?"

PATIENCE.

THE wise Hillel was speaking to his disciples of patience. Then they said to him: "Master, give us an image and a sign, as was the custom."

Hillel answered and said: "I compare patience to the most precious thing that the earth produces, to a jewel. Pressed by sand and rocks, it reposes in the dark lap of earth. Though no ray of light comes near it, it is radiant with imperishable beauty, a child of the celestial light, which it preserves faithfully. Thus its brightness remains even in the deep night; but when liberated from the dark prison, it forms, united to gold, the distinguishing mark and ornament of glory—the ring, the sceptre, and the crown."

"How dost thou compare the most secret and modest virtue to the highest earthly ornament?" said the disciples.

"Her end and reward," said Hillel, "is the crown of life."



THE BEE-HIVE.

IN a certain town lived a noble philanthropist, who was very much grieved to see the children of the poor growing up in ignorance, and wasting their days in sloth. Then he said to himself, "I will try to amend this evil." He employed, accordingly, his fortune, and exerted his abilities to execute his noble design. But the multitude was too corrupt, the evil too great, and the exertions of a single individual too inefficient to carry the benevolent intention into execution. The attempt was unsuccessful.

Then the people mocked at the generous man, and said: "How well he has done his work! Now he is poor himself!" And others said: "He wished for honour and gain, and has found shame and loss."

So they said, shrugging their shoulders; his friends also forsook him, for they were parasites.

This grieved the generous man to the heart, and he resolved to separate himself from mankind, and to retire to a solitary place. Accordingly, he built a cottage, and planted a garden in a calm, secluded spot, far from the noise and bustle of the town. He amused himself by observing the plants and shrubs of the mountains, and listening to the songs of the birds of the forest; but he was not happy. He pondered on the cause, and said: "I need a being which can attach itself to me with that fidelity which is so seldom found among men. For this end heaven gave us the most faithful of all animals."

So he went, and brought a dog to his cottage, and gave it a name. Now he had a companion and follower in his solitude.

When he walked one morning in the adjoining forest, he said to himself: "I spend my days in the lap of Nature, and yet is there a void in my soul. What lack I?"

As he spoke thus, he perceived a bird feeding its young ones in the nest.

"Oh," exclaimed he, "a new sign! Man must have something to which he may devote his care and attention." And he put a bee-hive by the side of his cottage.

Now he spent hours and days in the shed where his bee-hive stood, gazing with admiration on the industry and skill of the busy little nation, discovering daily new wonders in their household, and their works; and his soul was filled with wonder.

But he wished to impart his thoughts and feelings to others. His dog looked at him and fawned upon him, but could not understand him. Then he went to the dwellings of the peasantry, where bee-hives were kept. They received him gladly, listened to him, visited him, and learned of him, for he taught them many things concerning the keeping of bees, of which they had never heard before; and when he left off talking about bees, he spoke of the high calling, and the aim of mankind. The peasants believed him in one thing as in the other, and honoured and loved him as their benefactor.

Thus nature and truth brought him back to mankind, from whom artfulness and falsity had estranged him.



FRIENDSHIP.

ONE morning in spring, two youths, friends like Damon and Pythias, were walking arm in arm in a wood. "Let us try," said the one to the other, "to find an image of our friendship. For man loves to find the picture of his own life in nature."

"Behold," said Damon, "the ivy clinging to the young oak. The tree grows in youthful beauty and vigour, like the column of a temple, which youths and virgins have adorned with the first foliage of spring. The tender ivy clings to the oak, as if it strove to become one with the tree; but for the oak, it would creep in the dust."

The young men looked at each other, and said: "The picture is beautiful, and the fresh verdure of the ivy fitly adorns the dark stem of the oak. Thus the mighty man, ennobled by love, supports and raises the feeble and delicate. Thus the heroic Hercules carried infantile innocence on his nervous arm. A beautiful, a lovely union! But it is not the picture of our friendship."

"Behold, the vine-dresser on yonder hill ties the vine to the elm! A wise combination. The strong supports the useful and flexible, which produces the finest fruit for man, and thus they strive unitedly to fill our cup with gladness. Blessing and praise for your useful endeavours!"

"But is not this a union made by the hands of man?"

said the youths. "His aim is gain. May not the vine, laden with clusters of grapes, break the twigs of the supporting tree? May not its broad foliage choke the leaves of the elm?"

"The picture is beautiful; it represents the combination of human forces into one domestic community, to produce the good and the useful; but it is not the picture of our friendship."

"The spirit-union of friendship may not be compared to any thing in heaven or on earth!" exclaimed the youths.

They were standing under the shadow of two young oaks. "Behold what splendid trees!" said they. "Their roots are firmly intertwined, their tops are equally raised to heaven. Both striving upwards, they combine to resist the storm; and if they should be overcome by the tempest, both will fall together. Is this the image of our friendship?" said the youths.

They looked at each other, their eyes beamed, and they embraced under the shade of the lordly oaks.



DIOGENES.

ALEXANDER, the king and hero of Macedon, left the Greek philosopher Diogenes with these words: "If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes."

Parmenio, one of the king's generals, who had stayed



behind after the king's departure, said : " A strange saying for a king and hero !"

" Not so," answered Diogenes ; " thou must translate it from the language of a prince into the language of the people. Then it will be ; I cannot but *honour* self-denial and temperance, but my ambition will forever prevent me from exercising those virtues *myself*."

Then Parmenio asked : " Dost thou not honour our king, or dost thou alone refuse to give him the title of the Great ?"

Diogenes. I also call him the Great !

Parmenio. To whom dost thou compare him ?

Diog. To Mount Etna in Sicily.

The general was surprised at this comparison ; however he continued, saying : " Dost thou think that ambition leads him to fight against Persia ?"

Diogenes replied : " Ambition is the fire in his veins."

Par. But he acts with consideration and reflection ; reason and the wish to honour his country guide him. Behold the composure of his countenance !

Diog. Snow and ice on the top of the mountain.

Par. By his victories he will spread the wisdom of Greece to the Indus.

Diog. First flames and lightning, then clouds of smoke and dust.

Par. He will raise Hellas to be the happiest and most glorious country.

Diog. Go to the Etna and the Lipares,* they will teach thee.

* Volcanic Islands.

Par. But the pupil of the wise Stagirite will know how to moderate himself.

Diog. Dost thou know what the Sicilians relate of the Etna?

Par. Let me hear it.

Diog. The giant Enceladus was about to storm heaven, after he had subdued the earth; then the gods cast Etna upon him. Whenever he moves, Sicily trembles; and the flames of the mountain are the outbreaks of his rage.

Par. And when will his fury cease?

Diog. When undermined by his own fire, he shrinks and crumbles into himself.

"Then thou wouldst not change thy cloak for my general's staff?" asked Parmenio, smiling.

Diogenes replied: "Should I roll my tub up the mountain with great toil to live on the edge of his crater?"

Thus spoke the sage, and Parmenio went his way thoughtfully.



THE BUTTERFLY.

LITTLE Rudolf came running from the garden in wild delight, and exclaimed : "What a beautiful little bird have I caught ! It was perched on a flower, its wings shining like gold and silver, and still more beautiful. Then I approached softly to seize it, and I caught it directly. Now I will take great care of it, it shall not fly away ; and I will give it milk and bread to eat." Thus said little Rudolf.

Then his father replied : "Well, Rudolf, show us what you have caught, that we may admire it." The boy put

his hand hastily into his bosom, and pulled forth a pretty butterfly; but its wings had lost their splendour, the gay-coloured dust was sticking to the hands of the boy, and the delicate pinions were destroyed.

Then the boy sighed, and said: "Oh, how the thing has been disfigured! It does not look like the pretty little bird on the lily. Fie, why are they so fragile?"

Thus said the boy, and threw the butterfly angrily to the ground.

The father answered: "Why are you angry? Is it the fault of the bird that nature formed it so delicately? You grasped it with a rough hand, and thus its brightness and its flower-life withered away."



THE MELANCHOLY SON.

THERE was once a rich man who possessed many splendid houses and beautiful gardens, and kept different kinds of animals, some for use, and others for pleasure. He had an only son, whom his soul loved. He had sent him abroad to improve in learning, and to acquire different branches of knowledge. After some years he returned home. Then his father was very glad, and made a great feast; but the son went about despondingly, troubled in his heart, for he thought in himself: "My father loves me no more, and will neglect me."

Then his father was grieved and surprised, and said:

“My son, be not cast down, but banish sorrow from thy heart; how could I forget or neglect thee! Behold, I keep so many servants, and pay for many plants and animals which are of no profit to me; how could I forsake thee, that art of my own kindred?”

Thus said the kind father; but the youth turned away from him, cast his eyes to the ground, and walked in melancholy as before.

Then his father led him into the garden, to an arbour on an eminence, and said: “Behold, from the days of thy youth thou hast loved the beauties of creation, and the loveliness of the field, therefore I caused this arbour to be built, that thou mightest look around thee, and enjoy the wide prospect. At the foot of the hill the rivulet is murmuring, the nightingales are singing and building their nests, and the beauty of spring is nowhere brighter than here. Be at ease, and of good cheer, my son.”

Thus said the kind father; but the brow of the youth was clouded still more, he turned away from the lovely view, and bent his eyes to the ground.

Soon after, the friends of his youth came to see him, and rejoiced again; then his father was glad, and thought: “Now he will be cheerful, and his heart will be merry!” And he said to him: “Behold, my son, here are the friends of thy youth, who wish to see thy face, and to be merry with thee.”

But the youth averted his countenance more sorrowfully than before, and hid himself from his friends.

His father followed him deeply grieved, and said to him: “Alas! my son, why doest thou thus? Of what use is

thy knowledge, and the wisdom which thou learnedst in the strange land, if thou wilt thus despise the enjoyments of thy home? Rejoice in thy youth, in the kindness of thy father, the beautiful gifts of nature, and the agreeable society of friends who love thee."

Then the son lifted up his sorrowful countenance, and said: "Alas, my father, I left home with a pure heart, but now I cannot lift up my eyes, — A SIN lieth upon my soul!"

Thus he said, and bent his eyes upon the ground; and his father turned away, and wept bitterly.

SOLOMON AND NATHAN.

NATHAN, the wise instructor of the youth Solomon, was greatly grieved and troubled concerning him, for Solomon loved wine inordinately, and was the companion of worthless youths, drinking till he was drunken, and his lips uttered perverse things. Nathan mourned thereat, for he knew how highly gifted the youth was by nature, and that he was destined to reign over Israel.

But Solomon disregarded the instruction of the divine prophet, and spent days and nights in carousing.

One morning a messenger came to him, saying: "Behold, I passed the vineyard of my lord the king, and I saw a lad who destroyed the vine; tearing off the leaves and pulling the vines out of the ground, and treading the precious grapes under foot in the dust."

Then the youth Solomon was wroth, and took his sword and ran to the king's vineyard, crying, "He shall atone with his blood for his crime, that he hath destroyed the noble fruit!" Thus he exclaimed in the fury of his soul.

Then Nathan met him, and asked the youth, "With whom art thou angry, and why is thy sword in thy hand?"

Now Solomon told the wise Nathan the message which had come to his ears concerning the destroyer of the vineyard.

Then Nathan said, "And, therefore, thou art wroth, and thy countenance is as that of a young lion."

Solomon answered and said: "Shall I not punish the wicked deed that spoileth the noblest gift of nature of its ornaments, and treadeth into the dust the fruit which Heaven gave to gladden man's heart?"

Then Nathan said with emotion: "Ah, Lemuel! put up thy sword in its place. It was I who sent the messenger. No harm hath befallen the vineyard; but the people look to Solomon as to a blooming vine, expecting joy and blessings from him,—and Solomon himself destroyeth the noble gifts which God hath showered upon him, and perverteth his wisdom by intemperance. Wilt thou still be like one who sleepeth in the midst of the sea, and like a man who slumbereth on the mast-head?"

Thus said the wise instructor of the youth, and Solomon communed with his heart; and when he looked at the wine glittering in the cup, he remembered the vine which the spoiler trod under foot, and he forsook his evil ways, and the Lord gave him wisdom and understanding.

THE FLOWER-GATHERING.

POOR delicate Theresa had been compelled to keep to her bed during the finest part of spring. When she recovered, and gained new strength, she began to speak of the flowers, and asked whether they were blooming so prettily as the year before. For she was very fond of flowers, but could not yet go out to gather them. Then Eric, the brother of the sick girl, took a basket, and said secretly to his mother: "I will go and gather the finest flowers of the field for Theresa."

He was going out for the first time; for so long as his dear sister had been suffering, he refused to leave her. Now spring appeared to him more charming than ever; for he beheld its beauties with a pious and loving heart.

The cheerful boy roamed up hill and down dale; the nightingales were singing, the bees humming, the butterflies fluttering, and the finest flowers were blooming in abundance at his feet. Singing, he went from one hill, from one flower to another, his soul was as pure as the blue azure above him, and his eye as bright as a streamlet springing from a rock.

At last he had filled his basket with the most beautiful flowers, and on the top of them lay a wreath of ripe wood-strawberries, strung like pearls on a blade of grass. Smiling, the happy boy surveyed his full basket, and sat down to rest on the soft moss under the shadow of an

oak-tree. Calmly he looked upon the beautiful landscape radiant with the glow of spring, and with a thousand blossoms; and listened to the nightingales which warbled around him.

But the boy was weary with joy; the rejoicing of nature and the song of the birds lulled him to repose.

Thus he lay beside his filled basket—a living image of the sensual pleasures, the enjoyment of which had exhausted him, and of their fading.

The lovely boy slumbered calmly; but, meanwhile, a thunder-storm approached. Darkly and silently the clouds gathered in the sky; then the lightning flashed, and the voice of thunder was heard nearer and nearer. Suddenly the wind roared in the branches of the oak, the boy was terrified, and awoke. On all sides he saw the sky darkened with threatening clouds, no sunbeam brightened the scene. A violent clap of thunder followed; the poor boy was stupefied by the sudden change.

Son of pleasure, art thou safer on thy cheerful road?

Large drops of rain rustled on the foliage of the oak; then the terrified boy grasped his basket and fled.

The tempest was over him. Rain and storm increased, the thunder rolled more terribly, the water was streaming from his locks and down his shoulders. He could hardly proceed on his way.

Suddenly a violent blast of wind caught the basket in the boy's hand, and scattered all his carefully gathered flowers over the field.

Then his countenance fell, and with angry mien he hurled the empty basket to the ground. Weeping bitterly,

and drenched with rain, he at length reached the house of his parents.

Wise son of earth, is thy ill-humour or thy anger more excusable, if one of thy wishes is refused, or if a plan miscarries?

The storm soon exhausted its fury, and the sky cleared up. The birds began to sing again, and the peasant resumed his labour. The air was purer and cooler, and a sweet calmness prevailed over hill and valley. The refreshed fields smiled with new strength and fragrance. All things seemed to be strengthened and renewed, as if nature had but just issued from the hands of the loving Creator, and mankind looked up with grateful joy to the distant clouds which had showered blessings on their fields.

Storms purify the air, and the blessing of heaven descends from the dark cloud;—thus struggles and sufferings ennoble the son of earth, and make him to bring forth the fruits of renovation,

The brightness of the sky again tempted the boy forth. Ashamed at his ill-humour, he went to look for his basket, and to fill it with fresh flowers. He also felt reanimated. The breeze of the cool air, the odour of the field, the verdant foliage of the trees, the songs of the feathered dwellers of the forest,—every thing appeared to him doubly beautiful after the thunder-storm and the refreshing rain; and the consciousness of his foolish and unjust temper made him gentler and more modest.

The joys of this world require the discipline of hard



change to sustain and ennoble them : — a proof of their earthly nature.

He found the basket at the declivity of a hill. The prickly branch of a bramble had caught it up and secured it from the wind. The boy looked thankfully at the bush, and disengaged the basket. But great was his delight and surprise when he looked around. The field sparkled like the starry sky. The rain had brought forth thousands of fresh flowers, had opened thousands of buds, and dew-drops sparkled on the leaves. Eric went about gathering like a busy bee.

The sun was setting when the boy, with filled basket, hastened cheerfully home. How delighted he was with the treasure of his flowers, and the garland of his newly-collected strawberries ! The setting sun brightened his countenance on his way homeward ; but his eye was still brighter when he saw the delight and the thankfulness of his tender sister.

“ Are not the pleasures which we prepare for others the most beautiful ? ” said his mother affectionately.



REPENTANCE.

A COUNTRYMAN had reared with his own hands a number of rare fruit-trees ; to his great delight, they bore their first fruits, and he was anxious to know of what kind they might be.

Then came into the garden the son of a neighbour, a wicked lad, and seduced the son of the countryman, so that they went and robbed all the trees of their fruits before they were fully ripe.

When the owner of the garden came and saw the plundered trees, he was much grieved, and cried, "Ah, why have they done me this harm? Wicked boys have marred my joy."

These words smote his little son to the heart, and he ran to the son of the neighbour, saying: "Alas, my father is very much grieved by the deed we have done. Now I have no more peace in my mind. My father will love me no more, but will punish me by contempt, according to my deserts."

Then the other answered: "You fool, your father knows not, and will never learn, that it was you who did it. You must hide it carefully from him, and be upon your guard."

But when Gotthold — that was the boy's name — came home and saw the kind face of his father, he was not able to look kindly at him in return. For he thought, how should I look cheerfully into his face whom I have grieved? I cannot even look at myself; it lies like a dark shadow upon my heart.

Now the father came and gave to each of his children of the fruits of the autumn, and likewise to Gotthold. Then the children ran to him and were very glad, and began to eat. But Gotthold hid his face, and wept bitterly.

The father perceived it, and said: "My child, why do you weep?"

And Gotthold answered: "Alas, I am no more worthy to be called your child. I can bear no longer to be in your eyes other than what I am, and know myself to be. My dear father, show me no further kindness, but punish me, that I may come back to you, and cease to be my own tormentor. Let me suffer heavily for my evil doings; for behold, it was I that robbed the young trees."

Then the father took his hand and embraced him, saying: "I forgive you, my son. God grant that this may be the first and the last time that you have need of concealment. Then I shall not be sorry for the trees."



THE FIRST AND THE LAST SMILE.

Eve, the mother of all living, bare with sorrow her second son. Like the dumb beasts of the field, and without signs of human sense, the new-born babe lay in her bosom; the voice of his weeping, and his sucking lips, being the only marks of his faint life.

"Alas!" said the mother, with a sigh, to the father of the boy, "I must not only in sorrow bear children, but also bring them up in sorrow. No ray of joy brightens the dark nights which I spend watching over him. The look of Cain is dark and gloomy, and he wanders before us like the image of our transgression; and from this child I hear only the voice of wailing, or see him lying without a mark of human life; his soul is like an undeveloped leaf, which

dies in the bud. Happier than man are the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air. Doth not the lamb skip about its mother, and the young chicken take refuge under the wings of the hen? Alas! the beasts of the field reproach us with our sin when we look on them.'

Thus she spoke, and called the boy Abel, that is, when interpreted, "Sorrowful;" and she mourned over him for a month.

But Adam said: "Weep not, mother; the Lord will do all things well, and have mercy upon us."

And Jehovah had mercy on the weeping mother. The angel of Paradise approached invisibly, and touched the lips of the babe on the lap of the sorrowing mother. Then the boy opened his tender lips, a dimple appeared in his cheeks, the ray of the first smile shone on his countenance, and his eyes looked up to his mother.

Now the mother arose with tears of joy, and called the father, and gave him the child; and the babe looked also at his father, smiling the second time.

The father lifted up his voice, and said: "Blessed be the name of the Lord; he hath turned our sorrow into joy. He hath exalted our child above the beasts of the field, which bend their head to the ground, and their countenance is void of expression. But the face of the child is become like that of the messenger of the Lord, and like the countenance of Eve when joy and gratitude fill her heart: blessed are we, for our eyes have seen the sign of the Lord, and Abel is a living soul. Hath it not passed over the countenance of the child like as when the breath of spring reneweth the face of the earth? Blessed be the

day when the Lord looked in mercy on our child; His name be blessed for evermore." Thus said Adam, and caressed the child. And Eve tended the child, and said: "I have seen the sign of God on the child, therefore will I watch over him with care."

And the boy increased in grace and wisdom, and Adam gave him a flock to keep; the flock became numerous in his keeping, and the lambs loved the youth, for Abel was kind, and feared God.

Then Cain was wroth, and conceived envy and malice in his heart, because that Jehovah was with Abel; for Cain's heart was evil from his youth, and the Lord was not with him.

On the day of his birth, Abel made a sacrifice to the Lord, and brought of the first fruits of his flock; and his heart was full of joy and gratitude. But Cain was wroth with his brother, and his countenance fell, and he smote his brother Abel on the head, that he sank to the ground; then Cain laughed him to scorn, and left him in his blood.

Now the father and the mother of the youth came and found him slain; and Eve bent over him, and wept sore. But Abel raised his bleeding head, turned his eyes towards his weeping parents, and a sweet smile played on his lips. Then he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, and the countenance of the dead was placid and calm.

Then Eve lifted up her voice, and said: "Oh, such was his look when for the first time he smiled on my lap. If such is death, Adam, oh, then the death of the righteous is only the passing away to a new and better life."

Thus spake the mother of all living; and both parents wept sore, and laid the body of Abel in the ground. The lambs mourned for their shepherd, and on his grave bloomed the flowers of the field.

THE SEVEN CHILDREN.

EARLY at dawn of day a countryman rose with his wife, and they thanked God for the new day, and the refreshment of sleep. The rays of the morning sun brightened the chamber, and fell on their seven children, who lay sleeping in their beds.

They looked at the children one after another, and the mother said: "There are seven of them. Alas, we shall have much trouble to provide for them!"

Thus the mother sighed, for there was a dearth in the land.

But the father smiled, and said: "Behold, are they not seven, and are all asleep? and all have ruddy cheeks, and the morning sun shines on every one of them, that they look more beautiful than seven young roses? Mother, this bears us witness that He who made the sun, and sends sleep, is faithful, and changes not."

When they left the chamber, they saw at the door fourteen shoes in a row, always smaller and smaller, two for each child. And the mother saw that they were many, and wept.



But the father answered, and said: "Mother, why weep-est thou? They have all received the quick little feet; why should we be troubled about the coverings? The children have confidence in us; why should we not confide in Him who is able to do more than we can understand or ask? Behold, his sun is rising! let us begin our day's work, like the sun, with cheerful countenance."

Thus he said, and they worked; and God blessed their labours, and they earned sufficient for themselves and their children. For faith elevates the heart, and love affords strength.

THE GOLD-PIECE.

THE only son and heir of a very rich man caused a large and splendid medal to be coined on the occasion of his father's death. The gold-piece bore many beautiful emblems and inscriptions praising the merits of the deceased.

The day when the magnificent funeral took place, the rich son and heir distributed a number of these costly coins among his relations and friends. All extolled the generosity of the giver, the beauty of the gold-piece, and the merits of the deceased.

Soon after, the rich heir assembled all his friends to a splendid entertainment, and on this occasion they heard that a poor relation of the rich man had sold the gold-piece which he had received.

"How shameful," exclaimed the rich son, rising angrily from the sumptuous feast, "to part with such a treasure! I gave it him from compassion: but now I see that I have lavished my kindness on a man of low mind."

The guests at the rich man's table condemned the poor relation unanimously, and each of them was busy to spread the story about the town.

Then the poor man presented himself before his rich relation, with pale and haggard looks.

"A new mishap," he began, "deprived me of the last remains of my fortune. My wife languished with grief and illness, my poor, innocent children were crying for bread; then I thought of the gold-piece, till then so carefully treasured; I took it, and now the world says—"

He could speak no more, — grief deprived him of the power of utterance.

But the rich heir turned his back upon him and left him.

SAUL AND JONATHAN.

ONE day, on the feast of the new moon, Saul, the king in Israel, spoke friendly words to his son Jonathan. The king said: "Tell me, my son, wilt thou not forsake the son of Jesse, to whom thy heart clings so fondly?"

Jonathan answered: "My father,—how could I forsake



myself and the feelings of my heart? Thus also I cannot cease to love the son of Jesse."

Then the king asked again: "What findest thou so great and so noble in the shepherd of Bethlehem, that thy heart turneth thus towards him? Is it his ruddy countenance, or his music, or the strength wherewith he smote the Philistine? Behold, there are many in Israel greater than he in beauty and in might."

Then Jonathan answered: "Let not my father be wroth with me. I think neither of his countenance nor of his art, nor of his deeds; I know not why or how, but I know that I love him as my own soul."

Then the king was wroth, and said: "Dost thou not know that he will take the kingdom from thee, and make himself king in Israel?"

And Jonathan's countenance brightened, and he said to the king his father: "O my father, let him do this. Is it a great matter which of us two reigneth in Israel? For behold, we have made a covenant before the Lord; and I shall always be with him, and be the next to him."

When the king heard these words, his spirit was enraged yet more, and he seized his javelin to smite his son. For he knew not what love was, and had no friend in his household.

But Jonathan turned and went from his presence, and ate and drank not on the feast of the new moon;—for he was grieved in his soul for David his friend, that his father condemned him.

THE BLIND MAN.

A BLIND man lifted up his countenance towards the mild rays of the spring sun ; their warmth streamed through his limbs and animated him, and their radiance fell on the dried-up sources of his eyes, which he turned unceasingly upwards.

“O thou incomprehensible ocean of light!” exclaimed he ; “thou masterpiece of the Almighty hand, which created thee and guides thee on thy glorious course ! From thee come everlasting blessings, life, and warmth, and thy strength doth never fail ! How great must He be who made thee !”

Thus spoke the blind man. Another man was standing near to him, and hearing his saying, was surprised at his words, and said : “How canst thou admire the day-star, that seest it not ?”

Then the blind man answered, and said : “Even so, my friend. Since the light of my eyes is darkened, and the lustre of the sun is hidden from me, his glory dwells in my soul. When I feel his animating influence, he rises in double splendour before the eyes of my soul ; but you behold him like every thing that you see daily, only with the eye of your body !”



THE SPIDER.

A BOY went with his father into the vineyard. There he found a bee in the web of a spider, which already opened its jaws to devour its prisoner; but the boy saved the bee, and destroyed the web of the rapacious insect.

The boy's father observed it, and said: "How can you, my son, value so little the skill and dexterity of the insect, that you destroy its ingenious and laborious work? Did you not see how beautifully and regularly the tender threads were interwoven? how can you be at once so compassionate and so cruel?"

The boy answered: "Does not the spider employ its skill and dexterity merely to murder and to destroy? But the bee makes honey and wax. Therefore I liberated the bee, and destroyed the web of the spider."

The father approved of the judgment of frank simplicity which condemns even the brilliant talents which, springing from egotism, are bent on destruction and harm.

"But," continued the father, "perhaps you have wronged the spider. See, it protects our ripening grapes from the flies and wasps, by spreading its web before them."

"Does the spider do so," asked the boy, "to protect them, or to satiate its own blood-thirsty appetite?"

"Indeed," answered the father, "I dare say the insect cares little for the grapes."

"Oh," said the boy, "then the good which it does involuntarily has no value at all. The good motive alone forms the beauty of every good action."

"Very true," said the father, "the praise is due to Nature, who knows how to apply even dangerous and hostile things to the preservation of the good and the useful."

Then the boy asked, "Why is the spider so solitary in its web, while the bees live and work together in social harmony? So should the spiders make a large web, and live together."

"My dear child," answered the father, "many can join in harmony for a good aim only. Malice and selfishness bear the germ of destruction in themselves. Therefore, wise Nature would not try to effect what men experience so often to be impossible and pernicious."

When they returned home, the boy said: "I have learned to-day something from the ugly insect."

"Why not?" answered the father. "Nature has placed the hostile by the side of the amiable, and the evil beside the good, that the good may appear clearer and brighter by the contrast. Thus man may learn, even from evil."



THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

WHEN the days of Abraham, the godly patriarch, drew towards their close, he lay down, old and weary of life, on his bed, and called to him his children and his children's children, and they stood in a circle around him. Then the patriarch said with a cheerful countenance: "Children, the God in whom I have believed now calls me!"—and he blessed them. But his children wept, and said: "Ah, would that the hour might pass thee by once more!"

But he answered: "Not so, my beloved. If I have walked all the days of my life before him in uprightness and love, how should I hesitate to go to him now that he calleth me?"

And when he had said this, he bent his head and expired. And the form of the dead man was as the form of one that sleepeth.



THE PAINTER AND HIS MASTER.

A YOUNG painter had finished an excellent picture, the best he had ever produced ; even his master found no fault with it. The young painter was so delighted with it that he contemplated his work incessantly, and gave up his studies,—for he imagined he could never surpass his picture.

One morning, when he was about to indulge again in the contemplation of his work, he found that his **master**

had effaced the whole painting. Weeping with rage, he ran to inquire the cause of this cruel proceeding.

The master answered: "I have done it after careful consideration. The painting was well done, a proof of thy progress, but at the same time it was thy ruin."

"How so?" asked the young artist.

"My friend," answered the master, "thou didst no longer love the art in thy painting, but thyself. Believe me, it was not perfect, even if it appeared so to us; it was but a study. Now take the pencil again, and try what thou canst create. Do not repent of this sacrifice. The sublime must be in thy soul before thou art able to represent it on the canvas."

Boldly and full of confidence in himself and in his master, the young artist set to work again, and painted his most splendid piece: "The sacrifice of Iphigenia." For the name of the artist was Timanthes.



THE PRIMITIVE PEOPLE.

IN Asia, in a region encircled by mountains on all sides, lived a small tribe of men. Their manner of life was simple, and their wants few and easily supplied.

Once a family had taken refuge in this secluded spot from the persecution of tyrants; the heads of this family died soon after their arrival, and left some children of tender age in this wilderness; from these the tribe had

gradually formed itself. They knew little of language, but they had preserved a saying, that there was a supreme being called God. But of what this being was, of his dwelling-place and agency, they knew nothing. They worshipped the mountain-stream which flowed through the valley as their god, for they drank from its floods, and the river was the only water in the valley, and rushed mightily.

Suddenly the snow from the mountain-tops swelled the river; the water inundated the valley, and carried away the people and their dwellings. Then they trembled before their god, and said: "He is wroth with us: arise, let us bring him a sacrifice of what is dearest to us, as soon as his fury rages again."

Thus they spoke, and resolved to throw their young children into the flood to propitiate the deity, as soon as the water should begin to swell. The parents wept and awaited with fear and trembling the day of the sacrifice. Thus superstition destroyed the tenderest feelings of their hearts.

The day of the sacrifice came; the weeping parents brought their children. But, behold, a stranger appeared among them, whom they called Maho, which signifies, "Son of the sea." He said: "Will you add the worst to what is bad? Subdue the river!"

But the people were astonished, and shrunk back; some said: "He blasphemes."

The stranger had a lyre in his hand; he touched the strings and began to sing; then the people gathered round him, and followed in a joyous circle the sound of his lyre;

he led them to the mountains; here they broke fragments of the rocks, and built a dyke on the banks of the stream. Now when the snow of the mountains melted, the river swelled; but it was restrained, and foamed on without overleaping its boundaries.

The people were astonished, and exclaimed: "The son of the sea is god!" But he smiled, and said: "Then you are all gods: for have you not subdued the river by your own exertions? You did not know your strength. Learn to discern and to exert what is in you, then you will learn to know God!"

"Where does he live?" asked they among themselves. However, Maho did not answer, but taught them to cultivate the fields and to plant trees.

Then they observed that the rain and dew of the clouds fertilised their fields, showering blessings from above. And they said: "God lives on high! The clouds are his tabernacle; he blesses our fields. We will give him of our fruits, that he may descend."

They built an altar on a hill, and kindled the first-fruits of their fields, and caused the smoke to rise as a sweet-smelling savour to their God. For they said: "He dwells on high, heaven is his dwelling-place, and the clouds are his tabernacle."

In the meantime, the valley increased in beauty, producing more and more plants and fruits, though the people knew but little of God, and the tribe was happy in its simplicity. But they longed greatly to see the unknown One; and they said to the wise man: "Make us an image, that we may think of him when we look upon it; for he

will not come down !” Then Maho smiled, and carved an image in human form, and they put it under a tent, and called the tent the house of God.

Now they asked no more who and where God was, for they took the image for God himself, offering up meats before him, and eating and drinking. Thus they degraded the highest, and were degraded themselves.

The wise stranger was angry at this, and he came forth and said : “ Let us see whether this be the powerful One !” He threw fire on the tent of their god, and it was burnt to ashes together with the image.

Then the people exclaimed : “ The image is not God !” and they asked again : “ Where shall we find him ?” The stranger said : “ Behold the flowers and the plants growing and blooming in silent beauty, and the earth bringing forth many different things ; for an invisible breath refreshes and surrounds them by day and by night. You know not the form nor shape of this breath, which fills mountain and valley, man and beast.”

Then the tribe exclaimed : “ Now we know it, his name is Breath ! He soars over the earth, and dwells also in the breast of men and beasts.”

But the wise man answered : “ Seek not to know his name and his face ; but be kind and good one to another, like the breath which pervades all things ; then the Invisible will draw nigh unto you.”

Now there arose among the people a man of proud and envious disposition, and strove against the stranger, for he hated him because the whole tribe honoured his wisdom ; they called this man Zalmi, which signifies “ the Gloomy,”



for he lived isolated from the rest, and his countenance was clouded.

Suddenly there appeared in the valley a terrible monster, which had come over the mountains, a shaggy lion, that destroyed both man and beast, and returned to his den with bloody mane. The inhabitants of the valley believed it to be an evil demon, and hid themselves in their huts; but the wise man said: "We must meet the monster;" and he went out at the head of the people.

When they approached the dwelling of Zalmi, he came out and mocked at Maho, and said to the people: "He will lead you into the jaws of the monster, that your number may be lessened, and he may govern you more easily. He has made a covenant with the evil spirit!"

The wise stranger held his peace, but the people were afraid.

In the meantime, the young son of Zalmi, whom he loved dearly, had strayed far from his father's hut. Behold, suddenly the lion rushed roaring from the forest, and the people were terrified, and shrank back. The lion sprang towards the little boy, his terrible jaws opened; and Zalmi and the mother of the child stood afar off, wringing their hands. Then Maho threw himself upon the furious animal, smote it upon the head that it staggered, and pressed it in his arms, until it gave up the ghost. Then, though faint and wounded, he carried the rescued child to his enemy. The father and mother of the boy fell on their faces weeping, and saying: "We are not worthy to lift up our eyes to thee!"

And the people approached, and would have worshipped the destroyer of the lion, and said: "Art thou a man, or the Invisible in human form, that thou doest good to thy enemy, and regardest not the risk of thy own life? Who art thou?"

Thus cried the people. But the wise stranger answered: "Children, I am a man like you. A still small voice in my heart bade me do as I have done; in your hearts also this voice is speaking; therefore you praise my action more than my strength. And likewise in the soul of our brother Zalmi, who hated me, this voice has now spoken loudly, so that he fell on his face and wept; and see, it dwells even in the heart of the child, for still he clasps my neck with his little arms, caressing me. Behold, my beloved ones, this is the breath and the voice of the Invisible in your hearts. Follow the teachings of this voice, and you will always know him better; for the Deity is never nearer to us than when he takes up his abode in our hearts."

Then the people exclaimed: "Now we see that neither a habitation, an image, nor a name is required!" And henceforth they worshipped the invisible Spirit in faith, and love, and childlike simplicity; and their eyes were opened more and more, and they asked no longer where and of what form God was.

DUSHMANTA.

DUSHMANTA was the richest among the Indian kings, and there was no end to his wealth and power. But pride and haughtiness filled his heart in his grandeur, and his ear was closed to the poor and lowly among his subjects, and he inclined his sceptre alone towards the princes and nobles who stood around his throne.

An old Brahmin, who had been the tutor of Dushmanta in the days of his youth, was deeply grieved thereat, and he left his solitude, strewed dust and ashes on his head, and stood between the splendid pillars at the king's gate.

The king perceived him, and ordered the Brahmin to be brought into his presence. "Why," asked Dushmanta, "appearest thou with these signs of sorrow, and why is thy grey hair covered with ashes?"

The Brahmin answered: "When I left thee thou wert the richest of the monarchs of India that ever sat on this throne, for Brahma had blessed thee abundantly; and I left the house of my lord and king with feelings of joy. But now I heard in my solitude that thy riches had departed from thee, and that the deepest poverty was thy lot."

Dushmanta heard these words with surprise, and smiled. "What foolish man," said he, "told thee these false words?"

Behold this palace, the gardens surrounding it, the servants who obey my voice"—

The old man answered: "All this is deception, that seeks in vain to dazzle the eyes of the wise. The sovereign of India has come from plenty to poverty."

The king marvelled at the words of the wise Brahmin, and said: "Where is the witness whose testimony shall overbear the sight of my eyes and the feeling of my hands?"

Then the old man lifted up his voice, saying: "The sun, the emblem of truth before Brahma's throne, the rain-cloud over our heads, and the fruit-tree before my hut, testify of thy poverty."

Dushmanta was mute; but the old man continued: "That Brahma adorned the queen of heaven with everlasting abundance of light and warmth, I know by the rays which from morning to night gild each blade of grass, lighting my hut equally with thy palace, and which sparkle in the dew-drop as well as in the ocean. When the cloud is big with rain, it goes over hill and dale showering blessings on the dry clod as well as on the lofty mountain. The fruit-tree bends its laden branches to the ground; thus Nature proclaims how Brahma has blessed her with riches. But thou art like a rock whose spring of water is dried up. If this be not sufficient, Dushmanta, look upon the tears of thy people, and then boast if thou canst of thy riches before the face of Brahma and his creation."

After having said this, the hermit returned to his hut; but Dushmanta kept the words of the Brahmin in his



heart, and became again what he was before, the benefactor and the blessing of his people.

One day he went to the hermitage of the Brahmin, and calling him from his hut, he said: "I may now appear again in the rays of the sun and before thy laden fruit-trees. But one thing is wanting."

"What could be wanting," said the Brahmin, "to the prince who is the blessing of his country and the father of his people?"

"That I should offer up my heartfelt gratitude," answered Dushmanta, "to the wisdom which led me back to the right way, and taught me that the happiness of his people is the only riches of their prince and leader. I had become poor, — thou hast once more enriched me abundantly."

Thus said the prince; and the old man embraced him with tears of joy, and blessed him.



THE JOURNEY.

A FATHER was going to send his son, a painter, into foreign countries, that he might acquire a further knowledge of his art, travelling according to the old German custom. When the day of his departure drew nigh, the father took the youth into the garden, and told him the



names of all the famous towns and countries which he was to visit.

The mother, who had accompanied them into the garden, was terrified when she heard this, and said: "Alas, who will guide and protect him on so long a journey? He might go astray, or misfortune might befall him!"

The father answered and said: "Do not make yourself unhappy about it; God and his heart will guide him."

Then he took the mother and his son to a bee-hive, and said: "Behold the simple form and life of this nation. Their calling is to collect the dust and juice of flowers, to form both into honey and wax. That also is their simple will. They set out to work, mindful of their home and their destiny. And God shows the little creatures the way, that they never lose themselves, and he gives them flowers and blossoms in abundance."

Then he turned to his wife, saying: "Is not our son more than many bees?" So the mother was comforted.



THE SHEEP-SHEARING.

A MOTHER once took her little daughter Ida to see the shearing of the sheep. Then the little girl complained, and said: "Ah, how cruel men are to torment the poor animals!"

"Oh, no!" answered the mother; "God has ordered it so, that men might clothe themselves, for they are born naked."

"But," said Ida, "now the poor sheep will be so cold."

"Oh, no!" answered the mother. "He gives the warm raiment to man, and tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

THE DEATH OF EGLON.

IN the town of Gaza, that lieth on the sea-shore, lived a man called Eglon, who was a judge in his nation many years, and possessed great riches. The people praised his justice and kindness more than his riches, and the poor called him in their hearts their father Eglon.

When he felt the day of his death approaching, he assembled his friends and brethren together with their children in his house, and said: "Behold, I shall die. The angel of death appeared to me this night; I heard the low rustle of his wings. Therefore, rejoice with me and be glad."

Those who surrounded him were amazed; and they looked upon each other and said: "Would that the words of Eglon might be found false this day, for the first time!"

But he smiled, and said: "Little children, may mourning and vain hopes be alike far from you. The end of my days is nigh. I see the angel of death approaching for the third time, therefore his aspect is not new to me. But to-day he appears for the first time with a smiling countenance; therefore I follow him gladly and joyfully."

Then his friends looked at him with surprise, and were silent.

But he perceived that they understood him not, and he began: "I will tell you the chief events of my life; then

you will comprehend my sayings. The days of my youth flowed on in peace, untroubled, and I knew not the seriousness of life. When I became a man, I was made a judge in Gaza; and the people had respect unto my sayings in the gates. I was blessed with the love of a wife, whom the voice of the people lauded as the most beautiful and noble of the daughters of the land; and I was called the happiest man on earth. Then God sent grievous sickness upon me, so that I lay in affliction for many months, and no wisdom could help me; for the physicians said: 'He will die.' Then the angel of death appeared for the first time, and his face was terrible to behold, and I implored that he might pass on.

"He passed: I recovered, and life seemed more beautiful to me than ever. My wife bore me two children, fair as two blooming pomegranate-trees, and each day of their unfolding was as a spring-day to me. Then all the people said: 'What blessing doth Eglon lack, either within his house, or without?'

"Behold, then the pestilence of Mizraim came over the sea, and both my children died, the lad and the maiden. And their sickness lay heavy on their mother; she said: 'The children are gone. Ah, Eglon, another world will guard them and give them back to us! My soul yearneth for them.'

"Thus she said, and she too died. Now I was alone upon my costly carpets, and my house seemed to me too large, and yet too narrow.

"Then I cried with an anxious voice to the angel of death, calling him the destroyer; and when he passed me

by, I said: 'In the depths of the sea will I seek for the cruel spirit, that he may unite me to the lost ones. Of what use is my life to me on earth?'

"So I wandered forth in the night to the sea-shore.

"But on the way I heard wailing and sighing in a hut, and I entered, for I thought to find here a companion in my misery.

"A woman lay on the floor tearing her hair, and five children were around her, weeping and begging for bread; near them stood an old man, bent and trembling with age. I was astonished, and asked: 'Woman, what aileth thee?'

"Then the old man said: 'In the last storm, the sea swallowed the ship of my son, her husband, and he himself perished in the waves. The rich man who lent him money for his ship demanded it back, and as we could not pay him, he took away all that we had; and to-morrow he will drive us from this hut, if hunger and want have not released us from our sufferings.'

"Then I said: 'Why do ye not go to Eglon, the judge of Gaza?'

"But the woman lifted up her voice, and said: 'Eglon lives in a palace, and is the happiest in the land.'

"'Moreover,' continued the old man, 'the debt is just, and Eglon has acknowledged it as just.'

"'God in heaven!'" cried I, 'Eglon, is this thy justice?' and I tarried with them in the hut, and ministered to them; and the next morning I said: 'Behold, I am Eglon, the judge of Gaza. Come into my house, that I may do justice.'

"And lo, from that time forth light arose within me; I

acknowledged my poverty in the eyes of God, and knew that I was a far greater debtor than they whom I had received into my house. I sought his countenance, and found it; and whatsoever I have imparted to the poor and the needy, hath it not been taken from treasures that were his? Thus hath my life changed its aspect three times, and the aspect of death in like manner. In my joy death appeared to me like a destroyer; in the anger of my suffering, like the jailor who presents the cup of poison to the prisoner; but I know him for what he is—a messenger of peace, who will lead me to my love.”

Thus said the old man. Then he bowed his head on his pillow, and died.



THE LITTLE TREE.

A FATHER was about to travel to a far country across the sea. Before he departed, he assembled his children around him; he had a little tree in his hand, and they planted it together. Then said the father: “When you look upon this tree, think of your father in the distant land. Ere it shall have bloomed thrice, I hope to be with you again, if God so wills it.” Thus he said, and departed; and the tree blossomed sweetly and fair the first time.

But when the father was on the sea, a terrific storm arose, and the ship was cast on the rocks, and he perished in the waves.

Then the children wept and mourned for many months; and when the little tree put forth buds and flowers, they stood around and wept afresh.

A wise man, a friend of their dead father, came to the children, and said; "Behold, the tree has lost its meaning, and has become an object of pain to you; let me, therefore, take it away and plant it elsewhere, that your grief may not be renewed by beholding it."

But the children answered, one and all, and said: "Ah, no! let us have the tree. Though joy blooms not from it, but tears and mourning, are they not tears of love, and the grief of child-like longing, shed for a dear father? Ah, no, take not the little tree from us!"

THE THREE GRACES OF SOCRATES.

ONE day Socrates was walking with some of his disciples in the gardens of Pericles, and they spoke of art and its celestial beauty.

Then spake Alcibiades with a wanton smile: "Tell us, O Socrates, how camest thou to sculpture the Graces, and afterwards to forsake the art, when thou hadst made thy masterpiece? Thou shouldst also have given us the Goddess of wisdom."

Socrates replied: "I will tell you the history of my artist-life; and thou, Alcibiades, mayest decide whether I should do wisely to take the chisel once more.

“In my youth I loved art with my whole soul, and visited the houses of great masters as well as the temples of the gods; for in the first I hoped to receive human instruction, and in the latter, divine inspiration. With this intent, I went one day to a little ancient temple on the borders of Attica; it was dedicated to the Graces. The simplicity of its exterior attracted me, and I said to myself: ‘Though thou mayest find here nought for thy art, — for how should a marble statue be brought here?—yet mayest thou nourish and improve a love for simplicity.’ For this love, thought I, it is right that an artist should possess. Accordingly I entered.

“At the gate of the little temple I met an old man, of kind and venerable mien. ‘What seekest thou here, my son?’ said he, with a gentle voice and kindly countenance.

“I told him that I was a follower of art, visiting the temples to gain knowledge.

“‘Thou hast done well, my son,’ replied he, ‘in that thou hast begun with thyself, and approachest the divine to feel its power within thee before thou dost venture to represent it. Thy striving shall not lack its reward. I will show thee what thou wouldst seek for in vain throughout all Greece—the first and most ancient images of the Graces.’

“Then he showed me three square stones, rudely fashioned, and said: ‘Behold, these are they.’* ”

* The Greeks were content at first to indicate the gods by a rough block or square stone; even Love and the Graces were, according to Pausanias, represented by stones. Winkelmann, *History of Ancient Art*.

"I looked at him, and was mute.

"He smiled, and said: 'Dost thou think it strange that the divine was in the heart of man before his mouth or his hand was able to express it? Then honour thou it, by representing it more worthily. Now my duty calls me; I am the priest of this temple.'

"He went his way, leaving me lost in strange reflections. I returned to Athens and formed the Graces; ye have seen them. I took them to the priest as a present for his temple. With timid hand I offered them to him.

"'It is well, my son,' said the kind old man; 'thou hast accomplished thy work with industry and love. But,' continued he gravely, 'tell me, art thou content with what thou hast done?'

"'Alas, no,' answered I sorrowfully, 'a higher image is in my soul, and I feel that my hand is not able to attain unto it.'

"Then the old man laid his hand on my shoulder, and said with unutterable sweetness: 'Take, then, thy statues to the halls of the rich in Athens, and leave us these stones.

"'Behold, my son, we, in our simplicity, have faith, therefore the simple token sufficeth us; they have only knowledge, therefore they want the sculptured work of art. But I counsel thee, acknowledge the divine germ which is in thee and in every human heart, and cherish it; so wilt thou bring forth the divine within thee and without thee.' Then he left me.

"I went my way with my statues, and deeply meditated on the words of the old man, who appeared to me like a

divine being. And thus I stood during a whole night ; — over my head the starry skies, beneath my feet the veiled earth ; and when the sun arose, there dawned also a light in my soul. I knew the eternal love which is in me and around me. I prayed, hastened home, laid my chisel at the feet of my statues, went forth and searched,—and then I found you, my beloved ones. Are not ye the most glorious images of the divine love ? and shall I not live longer in such pictures than in the cold, fragile marble ?”

Thus said Socrates, and looked with beaming eyes around the circle of the beloved youths. The profound and delicate-minded Plato took the right hand of his master, and gazed silently upon his countenance. The good-natured Apollodorus held his left hand, weeping. Alcibiades stood still, and cast his eyes to the ground, and his countenance glowed.

The sun was setting, and they returned home in silence.



THE TWO TUBS.

ONE morning, when the philosopher Diogenes came out of his tub to see the sun rise from the sea, he perceived with surprise that the light of the morning fell on two tubs instead of one. A young man of high rank had formed the resolution of becoming a philosopher, like the admired and derided Diogenes, and had in the night taken his tub to Cenchræa.

“ Well, my son,” said the old man, “ I see wisdom has

found a disciple." The youth smiled at the praise of the philosopher.

Then Diogenes took his tub, rolled it towards the sea, and pushed it into the water. The tub floated away on the waves.

The youth looked surprised. Whereupon Diogenes said: "I have found at length in thee a worthy disciple. Now complete the victory over thyself. Deliver up thy possessions to me, and I will go and distribute them among the poor."

The youth answering: "I have still some affairs to arrange at home," left his tub, and went his way.

Then Diogenes smiled, and said: "These strange men! they think that to live in a tub is enough. But they deceive themselves; how can they then be candid towards others?"

But the rich youth tarried at home, and was ashamed, feeling that he had only now taken the first step on the road to wisdom.

SOLOMON.

SOLOMON, the wise king in Israel, had sat on the throne of his father David for more than thirty years; he had collected all the treasures of the world around him, and enjoyed all the pleasures of life. One day the sun was hidden, and darkness prevailed over the land for several hours; and Solomon sat on the roof of his palace; his



heart was full of sorrow, and his soul troubled. Thus he sat till night, when the stars arose on the high vault of heaven, and he lifted up his face to the starry sky, saying: "The host of heaven above the sun roll in eternal brightness and unimpaired beauty on their course, without change of either light or darkness; but the great light of day, which enlighteneth the world, hath already spots and hours of gloomy darkness; the moon waxes and wanes without ceasing, and under the moon are the ~~fl~~uttering falling stars and the floating northern lights, creatures of the moment, and nearer to the earth flit the deceptive marsh-fires.

"Oh, ye pleasures of earth," sighed the king, "that mortal man should thus pursue ye, though his gaze can reach unto the stars!"

Thus he sat for a long time, his eyes fixed on the starry sky; then he descended and preached: "All is vanity under the sun."



THE FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH.

THERE dwelt at Damascus, in the land of Aram, a man called Baruch, who was famed throughout all the country for his riches, so that the people said, "He is rightly called Baruch," which signifieth "blessed." For he possessed the treasures of India and Arabia, and lived in a magnificent palace, with floors of shining marble covered with

costly carpets, and there was no end to his riches. Moreover, God had given him a virtuous wife, and seven blooming children.

But behold, there was neither joy nor peace in his heart; therefore he strove daily to increase the splendour of his house, and to change for the beautiful something more beauteous still. Yet he found no peace in his heart; he became more and more melancholy, and sleep fled from his eyes.

Then he said in his heart: "Of what use is my life to me? It can afford me nothing higher or better than what I have possessed since the days of my youth, and I know now that all beneath the sun is vanity, and my soul is vexed with all things."

Thus Baruch, full of sadness, went about in gloomy meditation, and grieved his wife and his whole house; so that men said, "He is possessed by an evil spirit." Therefore he resolved to make an end of his life, that he might be delivered from this sorrow.

Then Baruch heard that there dwelt in Memphis, in the land of Mizraim, a wise man, a prophet, into whose mind God had poured such wisdom, that he could give counsel in all things. And Baruch resolved to go and seek his advice.

So he called his faithful servant Malchi, and said: "Arise, take two camels, and load the one with gold and silver and precious stones, and costly spices of Arabia." And Malchi did as his master had commanded him. Then Baruch blessed his wife and his children, and he arose with his servant, and set out on their journey over the mountains, and through the desert, to the land of Mizraim. Thus



they journeyed seven days and again seven days in the desert, but they did not reach Mizraim. For the angel of the Lord smote them with blindness, so that they lost their way, and knew not whether to turn to the right or to the left; and they and their beasts were sore athirst, for there was neither spring nor well to be found in the desert; and at night they gathered the dew on their cloaks to moisten their parched lips.

Then Baruch sighed, and said: "I would give all the treasure wherewith the camel is laden, and still more from my storehouses in Damascus, for one cup of the water that spouteth forth in my garden out of marble and porphyry, and all my costly wines would I give for a little spring that might refresh us."

Thus Baruch sighed. The day was very sultry, and the heat waxed fierce, their thirst grew more and more, so that their souls fainted within them. Then they killed one of the camels; but they found no water in him wherewith to refresh themselves.

Then Baruch lifted up his voice, and said to his servant: "Alas, Malchi, my faithful servant and companion, have I brought thee hither that thou shouldst die for me? I was a plague to my house in my anger, and now I am an angel of destruction in the wilderness to thee, my faithful Malchi. And yet thou sufferest like a lamb; no complaint comes from thy lips, neither murmurest thou against thy destroyer, who brings a curse upon thee for thy fidelity. Alas, Malchi, how shall I recompense thee?" Thus said Baruch.

But Malchi answered and said: "How should I not follow my master willingly even unto death? I have eaten

of thy bread and drunk of thy wine to this day. I have enjoyed the good days, and shall I murmur at the evil ones? O that the Lord would but rescue thee from death, and take my soul as a ransom! I am a lonely man; but a wife and seven children will mourn for thee."

And when Malchi had said these words, he could speak no more; for his soul was faint, and he sunk to the ground.

Then Baruch's heart was nigh to break, and he fell on his face, weeping in his sorrow, and saying: "Lord, Lord, God of heaven and earth, destroy me, for I am not worthy of the mercy which thou hast shown me, and the burden of my sins oppresses my soul grievously; therefore destroy me according to mine iniquity!" And when Baruch had said these words, he held his peace and wept bitterly.

Behold, there came a rustling from the rocks like the rushing of a brook. Baruch lifted up his face and listened, and the camel likewise stretched out its neck and inclined its ear towards the sound, and approached the rocks. But Baruch said: "Will the Lord work a miracle, and open the rock in the midst of the desert, that he may save us from destruction?"

Thus said Baruch, and hastened to the place; and, behold, a fountain of clear water gushed from the rock; its waters flowed cool and abundant, and its form was pleasant to the eyes.

Then Baruch fell once more on his face weeping, and cried: "O Lord God, now I know of a truth that thou art merciful and of great goodness, and that thou doest wonders, though I am not worthy of thy loving-kindness."

Yet Baruch drank not of the fountain, but hastily took a vessel and filled it, and ran to his servant Malchi to bathe his temples and wet his lips. Then Malchi opened his eyes and looked at his master. Baruch fell on his neck and wept for joy, saying: "O Malchi, thou friend of my heart—my servant no longer! Oh, joy that I have found thee! Behold, the angel of the Lord has showed us a fountain; drink now, and refresh thy soul, that thou mayest live, and I may live too!"

And after Malchi had drunk, his soul was refreshed; and Baruch led him to the spring, and they took food from the camel they had brought with them, and sat down by the cool water, and ate and drank and were strengthened. They also gave drink to the camel, and rested from their labours. Then they were of good cheer, and stopped there the night.

When the sun rose, Malchi said to Baruch his master: "Behold, the sun is rising; if thou wilt, I will fill the bottles, that we may journey towards the west, to the prophet in Mizraim. Perchance we are not far from the land."

Then Baruch smiled upon Malchi his servant, and took his hand, saying: "Not so, brother Malchi! Behold, the Lord hath given me that wisdom which I sought. Why should I go to the prophet in Mizraim? Let us return towards the east, from whence we came."

Then they filled their bottles, gave water to the camel, and drank themselves; they blessed the spring which had saved them from destruction, and set forth cheerfully on their way.

When they arrived at their city, at Damascus, Tirza, the wife of Baruch, was sitting with her seven children under the palm-trees before the doors of the house, and she was astonished when she saw Baruch and his servant Malchi. But Baruch embraced his wife and his children, and wept for joy.

Then Tirza lifted up her voice, and said: "Blessed be the wise man of Mizraim, who sends you home so soon, and blessed be Baruch my beloved. For, behold, thou art changed, and thy face gloweth like that of an angel of peace. Who is the man of God that gave peace to thy soul? Tell me his name, that I may bless him."

Then Baruch looked upon his wife and smiled, and he told her all that had befallen him and Malchi from beginning to end. And he said: "Behold, not a man and a prophet, but the Lord himself has instructed me. In the desert I learned humility; in the spring of water I acknowledged the grace of the All-merciful and his goodness; in my servant I have found a good man and a friend. Now I return to you a new man, and in my heart dwelleth that peace which is more precious than gold and silver, and which all my riches could not yield me."

Thus said Baruch; and from henceforth he walked meekly and humbly and cheerfully to the end of his days. His riches he employed to do good in the whole country, and there was no poor and needy man to be found far and wide whom he did not help in his poverty. Then the poor whom he comforted said: "Of a truth he may be called Baruch; for he is a man blessed of the Lord, and he himself deals blessings to others."

But he said: "Behold, this also have I learned from the spring of water."

And when a year had passed by, Baruch went with his wife and children, and with Malchi his friend, to the spring, and built a house there to shelter the wanderer of the desert.

But the fountain he called *Beor Refah*, signifying the Spring of Health. And thus it is called to this day.



THE APPLE.

THERE lived at the court of King Herod a rich man, who was the king's chamberlain. He clothed himself in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. Once a friend of his youth, whom he had not seen for many years, came from a distant land to visit him. Then the chamberlain invited all his friends, and made a great feast in honour of the stranger. The tables were covered with rich viands in dishes of gold and silver, and many costly vessels with spices and wines of all kinds. And the rich man sat at the head of the table rejoicing in his heart, and at his right hand sat his friend who had come from the distant land. And they ate and drank, and were merry. Then the stranger said to the chamberlain of King Herod, "Riches and splendour like thine are nowhere to be found in my country." And he praised his greatness, and called him happy above all men on earth.

Now the rich man, the chamberlain of the king, took an apple from a golden vessel. The apple was large, red, and pleasant to the eye. And he took the apple, and said: "Behold, this apple hath rested on gold, and its form is very beautiful!" and he offered it to the stranger, the friend of his youth. The stranger cut the apple in two; and, behold, in the midst of it there was a worm!

Then the stranger looked at the chamberlain; and the chamberlain bent his eyes to the ground and sighed.



MAN AND WOMAN.

WHEN the father of the human race, and his wife the mother of mortals, had left the lovely garden of Eden, they mourned many days, and said: "Whither shall we wander on the earth, and who will direct our steps?"

Then they went to the cherub with the flaming sword, who guarded the gate of Paradise; and Eve leant upon her husband, and hid herself behind him, when they came before the celestial messenger.

But Adam entreated the cherub, and said: "Alas, the inhabitants of Heaven will henceforth walk no more with us, for we have become unholy, because we have sinned! Pray to the Creator of the world for us, that he may send down one of the angels, his ministers, who lead the stars in their course, to direct our paths."

Then the solemn cherub answered: "Man hath a star within himself, which exalteth him, though he have trespassed, over the stars and the suns which move in the skies. Follow this star!"

Then Adam implored again, saying: "O thou thoughtful minister of Jehovah, give us an image upon which we may look, and which we may follow, lest we turn aside again from the right way. For having failed once, our eyes are blinded to the light, and our ears dull of hearing the voice of the heart; show us an emblem of our life on earth."

Then the thoughtful cherub said to the man Adam: "When the Lord had made thee from the dust of the earth, and had breathed the breath of life into thee, then thou didst lift up thy countenance to heaven, and thy first look was fixed on the sun. May he be the image of thy life! With cheerful countenance he sets out on his course to begin the labour of the day; he turns neither to the right nor to the left, but goes onward, spreading light and blessing. He smiles at the storm that roars beneath, and issues from the clouds more beautiful than before, closing an heroic course, fraught with blessing, in the full splendour of his glory. Earnest man, may the sun be the image of thy life on earth!"

Thus spake the cherub; and the son of dust bowed his face to the ground, and was silent.

Now the lovely mother of all living stepped forward, blushing, to the heavenly messenger, imploring with gentle voice: "Also to me, thou holy one, speak a word of consolation and instruction. How could the feeble woman

look up to the high and glorious day-star, and walk in his ways?"

Thus Eve entreated; and the cherub had compassion on the tender woman, and spoke with smiling countenance: "When the merciful Father had formed thee, and had breathed the breath of life into thy bosom, then thou didst not look up to heaven, but thy eyes rested on the grass and the flowers of Eden, on the balmy shrubs and the fruitful trees of the lovely valley, and on the murmuring brook. Let thy doings be like the silent pilgrimage of the maternal earth. Without noise and dazzling splendour she walks on her peaceful course. Gently and imperceptibly she brings forth in abundance grass, flowers, trees, brooks, and streamlets; in silence, and unheeded, she makes all the children of her bosom bloom and be fruitful, and her own works praise and adorn her. Tender woman, let this be the image of thy life on earth! And your union, man and woman," continued the cherub, "be like the undisturbed harmony of the heavenly lights."

Thus said the celestial messenger; and a gentle breeze arose from Eden, and the Spirit of the Lord was in the breeze, bearing witness to the words of the cherub.

Adam and his wife Eve fell on their face and worshipped; and Eve trembled greatly, and wept.

THE UNFRUITFUL TREE.

A COUNTRYMAN had a brother in town who was a gardener, and possessed a splendid orchard full of the finest trees, so that his skill and his beautiful trees were commended everywhere. Then the countryman went to the town to visit him, and was astonished at the beautiful rows of trees that grew slender and smooth as waxen tapers.

Then the gardener said to him: "Look you, my brother; I will give you a tree, the best from my garden; you and your children, and your children's grandchildren, shall rejoice in the tree."

Then the gardener called his workmen, and ordered them to take the tree out of the ground. The countryman was very glad, and caused the tree to be carried to his house.

The next morning there was great doubt in his mind as to where he should plant the tree. For he said to himself: "If I plant it on that hill, the wind might catch it, and shake down the delicious fruit before it is ripe; if I plant it here, so close to the way-side, the passers-by will see it, and the luscious apples might tempt them to rob me; but if I plant it too near the door of my house, it is not safe from my own children and servants."

Thus he considered, and planted the tree behind his barn, on the north side, saying to himself: "Prying thievishness

will hardly think to find it here;" and he rejoiced secretly at his prudence.

But, behold, the tree had no fruit the first year, nor the second year.

Then he sent for his brother, the gardener, and reproached him, saying: "You have deceived me, and given me a barren, miserable tree, instead of a fruitful one. For, behold, this is the third year that it brings forth nothing but leaves."

The gardener laughed when he saw the tree, and said: "I am not surprised at it. You have planted the tree where it is exposed to the cold wind, and has neither light nor warmth. From whence should the flower and the fruit come? Its nature is, and will always be, noble. But you have planted with an evil and suspicious heart; how could you expect to reap that which is noble and agreeable?"



THE LAMB.

A FATHER was walking with his little son in the field, and they beheld a ewe, with its young one sporting and frisking about its mother. The boy rejoiced at the lovely sight; and after having looked for a long time at the sheep and the lamb, he said: "The lamb goes by its mother like a child, but where is its father?"

"The lamb does not know a father, and will never know one," was the reply.

The boy asked: "Then will it always stay with its mother?"

The father answered: "Only so long as it needs her milk for its support. As soon as it is able to eat grass it leaves its mother, and forgets her, and bends its head to the ground."

"But what do the children of men?" asked the boy.

"Behold," said the father, "when you were born, you lay in your mother's lap, and were fed at her breast, and you slumbered without consciousness for some months. Then your countenance brightened, you looked up from her bosom to smile in her face. This the little lamb cannot do. A few months more, and you knew your mother from all others; you uttered half-formed sounds, and stretched out your hands towards her. This also the lamb cannot do.

"Again some months elapsed, and you knew your father, and turned your little face from your mother towards him; and you said: 'Father and mother!' Behold, this the lamb cannot do. It bends its head to the ground. But you do not alone look upon the earth; you can lift your eyes to heaven.

"But, behold," continued the father, "the time shall be when even this shall not content thee. Thou wilt demand to look through the heavens, seeking to find the countenance of One that dwelleth above their hosts, and thou shalt find it. Then will a third word be born in thy heart, even the word of life."

Thus spake the father. Then the boy grasped his hand, and looked up to him with an earnest but cheerful gaze.

THE NAMES OF GOD.

WHEN Alexander, the son of Philip, was at Babylon, he sent for a priest from every country and nation which he had vanquished, and assembled them together in his palace. Then he sat down on his throne, and asked them (and there was a great number of them), saying: "Tell me, do you acknowledge and worship a supreme invisible Being?"

Then all the priests bowed their heads, and answered: "Yea, O king!"

And the king asked again: "By what name do you call this being?"

Then the priest from India answered: "We call it Brahma, which signifieth the Great." The priest from Persia said: "We call it Ormus, that is, the Light." The priest from Judæa said: "We call it Jehovah Adonai, the Lord which is, which was, and is to come."

Thus each priest had a peculiar word and particular name by which he designated the Supreme Being.

Then the king was wroth in his heart, and said: "You have only one lord and king, henceforth you shall have only one God; Zeus is his name."

Then the priests were grieved at the saying of the king, and spake: "Our people always called him by the name

we have proclaimed from their youth up; how then may we change it?"

But the king was yet more wroth. Then an old sage stood forth, a Brahmin, who had accompanied him to Babylon, and said: "Will it please my lord the king that I speak unto this assembly?"

Then he turned to the priests and said: "Doth not the celestial day-star, the source of earthly light, shine upon every one of you?"

Then all the priests bowed their heads, and answered: "Yea!"

Then the Brahmin asked them one by one: "How do you call it?"

And each priest told him a different word and a peculiar name, according to his own country and nation.

Then the Brahmin said to the king: "Shall they not henceforth call the day-star by *one* name? *HELIOS* is his name."

At these words the king was ashamed, and said: "Let them use each their own word; for I perceive that the name and the image constitute not the being."



THE LARK.

A COUNTRYMAN walked with his son into the fields during the fresh and balmy hour of a summer's morning. The cool breeze played with the silvery hair of the old man, and wafted the dust of the flowers like a light cloud over the waving grain.

Then said the old man: "Behold, how busy Nature is in our behalf! The same breeze which cools our brow produces the fertility of the field, that our garners may be filled. Eighty times have I seen this, and yet it is as lovely

to me as if I saw it to-day for the first time. Perhaps it may be the last time; for have I not reached the fullness of human life?"

Thus the old man said; then his son took his hand, and looked sorrowful.

But the father said: "Why wilt thou mourn? Behold, my day is far spent, and my evening is come. Night must pass before a new day can rise. But it will be to me like a cool and lovely summer night, where the dawn of morning meets the close of the evening twilight."

"Alas, my father," said the son, "how canst thou talk of that so calmly which will be the greatest sorrow to us? Thou gavest me an image of thy death; give me now also an image of thy life, my father."

Then the old man replied: "I can easily do that; for the life of a countryman is simple, like Nature which surrounds him. Dost thou behold the lark, how it rises warbling from the corn-field? Not in vain does she soar so near to the countryman, for she is the image of his life. Behold, born in the lap of the motherly earth, she keeps to the nourishing furrow. She builds her nest between the waving blades, and hatches and brings up her young ones there, and the animating odour of the green field gives strength to her wing, and to the voice of her bosom. Now she soars up to heaven, looking down from above on the blades and ears, and on the fostering earth, and looking upwards to the light which makes the blades grow, and to the clouds which send down rain and dew. When the morning scarce begins to dawn, she is already on the wing to greet the first messenger of coming day; and when the

sun sets, she rises once more, to inhale the last ray of the celestial day-star. Thus she lives a double life: the one a life of calm and silent work under the shade of the nourishing furrow and the verdant blades; the other a life of singing and fluttering in the purer regions of a higher world of light. But both these lives are one, and closely united. The inferior gives her the desire to elevate herself, and the superior inspires her with courage to labour silently and cheerfully."

Thus said the old man. The son pressed the hand of his father fervently, and said: "Yes, my father, thus was thy life! O that we may yet enjoy it long!"

Then the old man answered: "Earth is too heavy for me now! Why will you grudge me the higher life of fulfilment and of unchangeable endless light? The day is growing sultry. Come let us return home."



THE CORN-FIELD.

A PESTILENCE had ravaged the dwelling of a pious countryman, and had laid him, his wife, and four children, on a bed of anguish. Two children fell a prey to the angry plague, — his eldest son and a maiden, the support and joy of the mother. The labour in the field had been neglected, and their last hoarded farthing was spent.

At length the countryman recovered, and he resolved to

go out for the first time to the field which he had not seen for so long. But as he went out with his wife, a thunder-storm arose; it lightened and thundered grievously, and a heavy rain fell; so they waited till it was past.

After the thunder had ceased to roar and the rain to fall, the countryman said: "Let us go now. The odour of the field will be the sweeter after the long drought."

When they came to the corn-field, which had already put forth ears, the fragrance of the field blew fresh and sweet upon them, the dark clouds were scattered in the blue sky, and the beams of the sun poured from between the dark masses in long glowing streaks. The young ears and blades bent their heads heavy with the pearly drops, and the grass appeared in renewed freshness.

Then the countryman took the hand of his wife, and looked up to heaven, to the gleaming clouds and the flood of light, and said: "O Lord! to us also thou hast sent a storm; oh, let us be like this corn-field! We were laid low, and wept; oh, may we too bear good fruit, that we may gather our sheaves with joy!"

Thus the countryman prayed, and his wife wept, and said: "Amen, so be it!"

And both returned comforted to their home.

THE TEMPLE OF MEMPHIS.

WHEN Pythagoras, the sage of Samos, sojourned in Egypt, to drink knowledge from the ancient sacred fountain, the priests took him to the Temple of Memphis. Silent and grand, like a mountain, the wonderful structure rose in the morning dawn.

"How have human hands piled up these rocky masses?" exclaimed the Greek, in amazement.

"United power," answered the priest, "can achieve all things when guided and governed by ONE spirit."

Now the massive folding-gates of the temple opened, like the gates of the land of shadows. They entered, and stood silently among the magnificent pillars, and a breeze murmured through the vast halls, like the whispering voices of spirits.

Then a shuddering awe seized the young philosopher of Samos, and he trembled, and leant against the wall and wept.

Then came a priest to him, saying: "Why weepest thou?"

But Pythagoras was speechless; after a while he answered: "Ah, let me weep! Do I not feel that I am fearfully nigh to that Being whose name I dare not pronounce?"

Then the priest said: "Blessed be thou in thy humility, my son. May it bring thee nearer to the Invisible, to whom

this sanctuary was raised. But quit, now, the lofty precincts of the silent temple, and return to them that speak—to humanity. Remember that this temple was in the heart of a man before it rose from the rock. Dry thy tears, and be comforted.”

THE KING.

“MOTHER,” said the little William, “I should like to be a king.”

The mother replied: “Do you know what a king is, and did you ever see one?”

The boy answered, “No.” Then his father took him by the hand, with a smile, and said: “Come, I will show you a king.” And he went with him into the snow-covered courtyard; for it was winter, and very cold.

Now his father showed him a little bird, asking him: “Do you know this bird, and his ways and habits?”

The boy answered: “No; will you tell me about him?”

The father said: “See, this bird is the smallest of all of his kind, and of sober hue; yet it is highly favoured. Though the day brings cold, storm, and snow, and every thing be covered with ice and snow, it is always of good cheer. Look, now it flies to the top of the roof, looking around so cheerfully, as if the whole world were its own. And so it is, indeed, for the bird knows how to enjoy it.

“Listen, now it begins to sing; and its twittering sounds

so gaily over the fields, as if it were saying, 'How contented I am!' It does not care if the trough at the well, and even the oak-tree, should split with the frost; it sings cheerily in the storm.

"See, now it comes down to the trees of the orchard. It is looking carefully for the eggs of the caterpillars, which in spring gnaw the blossoms of the trees; now the little bird destroys them, that spring may appear with beautiful flowers, and autumn with fruitful branches.

"Do you see how it flies up to the weathercock of the house, beginning its song again, to gladden all those who hear it during the cold winter-time, and to be to them a pattern and example in cheerful contentedness and pious courage?"

Then the boy said: "What do you call the dear little bird?"

The father answered: "On account of its frank and noble disposition, men have given it a high name and dignity; for though it is small, they call it, from of old, the Winter King, and place it next to the proud eagle.

"May you have, like him, as long as you are young, a noble and royal disposition! When you are grown-up, the dominion will not be wanting."

Then the boy said: "Father, can the kings fly too?"

"No," said the father; "the bird has in this case an advantage over them; they are men, as we are."

"Oh," said the little boy; and when they were again by their fire-side, he asked his father to tell him more about the bird.

The father complied willingly with his child's wish, inculcating a grave doctrine by cheerful words. For kind nature sometimes does the same.



NATHAN AND SOLOMON.

WHEN Solomon was a boy, he read in the book of Moses the history of the creation of man. Then he went to Nathan his tutor, and asked: "How can the body of man be formed out of dust?"

Nathan answered: "How may a tree grow out of the earth with leaves, flowers, and fruit? And knowest thou not, that thy body will return to the dust, from whence it was taken? How cometh this to pass?"

"But why," asked the young prince, "doth the sacred history so fully relate the creation of men?"

"That man may not be puffed up," answered Nathan, "nor be proud of outward things; from the earth he is created, from her bosom groweth the bread that nourisheth him, and the crown also that adorneth the king's head is of the dust. The law of earth is eternal circulation; therefore it taketh back man's body and the king's crown. O Jedidia, forget not that thou art dust, and learn humility."

"But," asked Solomon, "he breathed also the breath of life into man's nostrils?"

"Behold," continued the prophet, "the breath of God which streameth through his bosom telleth him, every

instant, that he must have continual bounty from above, for thereon hang his being and his life. Ah, forget not, Jedidia, in whom thou livest and hast thy being, and preserve a humble childlike mind!"

Then Solomon asked again: "What advantage hath man over the beasts of the field?"

"This," replied the man of God; "that it is given him to know on *whose* earth and in *whose* breath he walketh. But, behold, to man was given a countenance to look down on the perishable dust, which is subject to him, and to look upward to the dwelling-place of eternal right. Thus he standeth with raised head in humility and in childlike faith, knowing himself to be the son and the image of the most high. O Jedidia, may the crown not bow thee to the dust, but be as a wreath of light about thy head!"

THE WONDER.

ONE day in spring, the youth Solomon was sitting under the palm-trees in the gardens of his father the king, and he looked to the earth in profound meditation. Then came to him Nathan, his tutor, saying: "Why musest thou so earnestly under the palm-trees?"

The youth lifted up his head, and answered: "Nathan, I would see a wonder."

The prophet smiled, and answered: "The same wish had I also in the days of my youth."

“And was it fulfilled?” asked the king’s son hastily.

“A man of God,” continued Nathan, “came to me, having a pomegranate-seed in his hand. ‘Behold,’ said he, ‘what will come from this seed.’ Then with his finger he made a hole in the earth, planted the seed, and covered it. When he withdrew his hand, the clods parted one from another, and I saw two small leaves coming forth. But scarcely had I beheld them, when they joined together and became a round stem wrapped in bark, and the stem increased before my eyes, and grew higher and thicker.

“Then the man of God said to me: ‘Give heed!’ And as I looked, I saw seven branches spread forth from the stem like the seven arms of the candlestick on the altar.

“I marvelled; but the man of God motioned me to keep silence and give heed. ‘Behold,’ said he, ‘new creations will begin.’

“Then he took water in the hollow of his hand from the rivulet by the wayside, and sprinkled the branches three times, and, lo, now the branches were covered with green leaves, so that a cool shade surrounded us and sweet odours. ‘From whence,’ cried I, ‘come this perfume and this reviving shade?’

“‘Dost thou not see,’ said the man of God, ‘the crimson flower bursting from among the green leaves, and hanging in clusters?’

“I was about to speak, but a gentle breeze moved the leaves, scattering the flowers around us, like as when snow descendeth from the clouds. Scarcely had the falling flowers reached the ground, when I saw the ruddy pome-

granates hanging between the leaves like the almonds on Aaron's rod.

"Then the man of God left me lost in amazement."

Nathan was silent, and Solomon asked hastily: "Where is he? What is the name of the man of God? Is he yet alive?"

Then Nathan replied: "Son of David, I have spoken to thee of a vision."

When Solomon heard these words he was grieved in his heart, and said: "How canst thou deceive me thus?"

But Nathan replied: "I have not deceived thee, offspring of Jesse. Behold, in the garden of thy father thou mayest see in reality what I told thee. Does not the same happen to the pomegranate-trees and all other trees?"

"Yes," said Solomon, "but imperceptibly, and throughout a long time."

Then Nathan answered: "Is it less by divine influence because it cometh to pass in silence and unheeded? It seemeth to me all the more divine. Learn to know Nature and her workings; then wilt thou gladly believe in a higher power, and long no more for a wonder performed by the hand of man."

The kingly youth stood for awhile in thought, and held his peace. Then he turned to the prophet, and said: "I thought upon the wonder whereof the book of the law beareth witness—the budding and blooming almond-staff of Aaron. Behold, it was of such a wonder that I spoke. It was a dry stick, like unto the staves of the other tribes of Israel; and yet it bloomed and budded in a single night, and bore almonds in the tabernacle.

"Doth it still bloom!" asked Solomon. And Nathan answered and said: "Of a truth, in the priesthood of Aaron and his tribe, and in due season it will bloom and bud yet more beautifully. For is it not an immortal and a heavenly thing, ordained of Jehovah, — a token of his mercy and of his covenant, whereunto the almond-staff bore witness?"

"I understand thy saying, man of God," said the youth, blushing. "If the heavenly, the immortal, is to be manifested, then — then the dead almond-branch, though it have neither root nor sap, must bloom as in the days of spring."

"And I too understand thee, Jedidia," answered Nathan; and he smiled kindly upon the king's son, and grasped his hand.

THE LAMENT OF CAIN.

WHEN Cain dwelt in the land of Nod, towards the east, beyond Eden, he sat one day beneath a sycamore-tree, with his head supported on his hands, and sighed. But his wife had gone forth to seek him, with the child Enoch in her arms. And when she had found him, she stood for a long time by his side under the sycamore-tree, and heard the sighing of Cain.

Then she said to him: "Cain, why dost thou sigh? Shall there be no end to thy mourning?"

And he was terrified, lifted up his face, and said: "Ah, is it thou, Zilla? Behold, my sin is greater than that it can be forgiven."

And when he had said this, he bowed his head once again, and covered his eyes with the palm of his hand.

Then his wife said with gentle voice: "O Cain, the Lord is merciful, and of great goodness!"

When Cain heard these words, he was terrified, and again said: "Shall thy tongue also be a thorn to pierce my heart?"

But she answered: "Far be it from me. Listen, Cain, and look around thee. Do not our fields bloom, and have we not twice gathered abundantly? Is not the Lord merciful, showering benefits upon us?"

Cain answered: "Yes, to thee, Zilla, to thee and thy Enoch: not to me. His goodness only teacheth me how far I was from him, when I—slew Abel."

Then Zilla interrupted him, saying: "Dost thou not till the land, Cain, and puttest thou not the grain into the furrow, and does not the morning dawn upon thee as in Eden, and the dew sparkleth on the flowers and the grass?"

"Alas, Zilla, my poor wife," replied Cain. "In the hue of the morning I see only the bleeding head of Abel, and for me the dew hangs on each blade a tear, and on each flower a drop of blood. And when the sun rises, I see behind me, in my shadow, Abel, whom I have slain; and before me, myself, who slew him. Hath not the murmur of the brook a voice that lamenteth for Abel, and is not his breath borne towards me in the breeze of the cool wind? Oh, more dreadful than the wrathful voice which

spake in the thunder: 'Where is thy brother Abel?' is the still small voice whispering every where around me. And when night comes, alas, it surroundeth me like a darksome grave, and around me lies a region of the dead, wherein I dwell alone. Only at noon I have my hour of peace, when the sun scorcheth my brow, and my sweat trickleth down to the furrow, and no shade is upon me."

Then Zilla said: "O Cain, my beloved; behold where our ewes are coming. White as the lilies of the field, their udders heavy with milk, they return by the light of the setting sun cheerfully to their fold."

Cain gazed on them with a heavy eye, and cried: "Alas, they are the sheep of Abel! Are they not red with the blood of Abel? Their bleating lamenteth for Abel. Is not this the voice of mourning? What could belong to Cain?"

Then Zilla wept, and said: "Am I not Zilla, thy wife, that love thee?"

But he replied: "How couldst thou love Cain, who loveth not himself? What can I give thee but tears and sighs? How couldst thou love Cain, who slew Abel?"

Then she held up Enoch, her son, in her arms; and the child smiled upon his father.

But Cain fell on his face under the sycamore-tree, and wept, and cried: "Alas, must I see the smile of innocence? It is not the smile of Cain's son. It is Abel's smile—it is Abel's smile, whom Cain slew."

Thus he cried, and lay mute, with his face to the ground. But Zilla leaned against the sycamore-tree,—for she trembled exceedingly, and her tears flowed down to the earth.

THE PROPHET AND THE KING.

WHEN Solomon, the king of Israel, followed after strange gods, and no longer walked uprightly before the Lord, the prophet Ahia, of Shilo, came to him, saying: "I have a word of truth to thee in the name of the Lord."

Solomon answered: "Speak, I will hear it willingly from thy lips."

Then said the seer of Shilo: "Thou deceivest thyself, O king; to him who doth not love it, truth is more bitter than gall, and sharper than a two-edged sword; and kings seldom love it. But that thou mayest recover, hear my saying. Jehovah hath bestowed on thee the precious gift of wisdom; but thou hast made it into foolishness and deceit. Do not the people offer sacrifices to Moloch on the high places of Sion?"

Then the king interrupted the seer: "Who hath made me a judge of the faith of men? Am I not mortal like them? If Jehovah suffers them, how should I not suffer them too?"

Then the prophet was wroth, and said: "The idols, in whose burning arms innocence waileth;—callest thou that toleration? I see thy wisdom speaketh the language of sensuality, and thy pride is clad in the garb of humility. Truth is too precious to lavish its words on hypocrisy."

After these words the prophet departed, and Solomon



was glad at his going; but the words of the man of God were as a thorn in his heart.

Then he put on his royal robes, and made splendid feasts, and lived for seven days and seven nights in revelry and sumptuous entertainments.

But when all was silent around him, then the words of the holy man returned to the mind of the king, and often in his dreams he heard the sound of his voice and saw his angry gesture. Then he thought in his heart, I will be no more troubled with these visions, and will hear a kind word out of the mouth of the prophet of Shilo; and he forbade the sacrifice of children to Moloch.

Then he sent for the prophet, and said to him: "Speak, Ahia."

The man of Shilo looked earnestly at the king, and said: "Dost thou think to hear comfortable sayings from me?"

Solomon answered: "Have I not forbidden sacrifices to be offered to Moloch?"

Then the prophet opened his mouth, and said: "Dost thou think to reconcile the Holy One by cunning, and to set thy heart at rest by ceasing to do the worst? King, thou deceivest thyself, and the truth is not in thee. Even if thou destroyest the high places of Moloch, and Camos, and Ashtaroth, and puttest away from thee what belongeth to idols, yet thou art on the broad path of folly, and hast not returned to the way which leadeth to wisdom. Behold, thou hast turned the blessings of Jehovah into a curse, and his benefits into destruction. He gave thee the treasures of the earth, and thou hast offered them up to thy lusts.

Thy fame is spread to the ends of the world, but iniquity is in thy heart. Nations obey thee, and the mighty are humbled before thee; but peace hath departed from within thee, and dissension rageth in thy breast."

Then the spirit of the Lord came upon the prophet Ahia of Shilo, and he took his mantle and tore it, and said: "Behold, Jehovah will send thee trouble, and make the crown a burden to thy head. Thy house shall be destroyed and torn, like this mantle. The palaces of Sion shall be like a cottage in a vineyard, and like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Behold, now turn away from thy evil ways, and walk uprightly before Jehovah."

When the king heard these words, he was troubled in his spirit, and said: "Thou scorner, thou shalt depart from my kingdom, and become an exile from the borders of Israel."

The prophet answered: "I shall go, according to thy command. But thou wilt not banish truth with me, O Solomon. The word of the Most High needeth not the lips of a man."

Ahia departed from the land of Israel, and dwelt in the wilderness. Then the angel of the Lord came to him, saying: "Ahia, thou hast spoken as it becometh a man of God."

Then Ahia answered: "But what will it profit Solomon? He will not forsake his evil ways, but will ruin Israel."

"Let not thy heart be troubled," replied the angel. "It is thy calling to sow the seed, and then to look patiently for the flower."

Then said the prophet: "Why did not Jehovah give to

the great king, with his wisdom, the crown also of wisdom — truth?"

The angel answered: "Ask rather, why did Jehovah, when he bestowed upon the bee the power to build her cell, and to gather honey, not also give her the wisdom to measure the cells, and to weigh the honey? Then the bee would be a man; but Solomon, according to thy will, would be as a beast."

"I am wroth with the king," said the prophet.

"How canst thou be wroth with the erring man?" replied the heavenly messenger. "The truth which he hath rejected tormenteth him. He who once hath known her, will not refuse her entirely and for ever. The mist will vanish, then the word of the Lord will strike him like lightning. Jehovah hath sent him affliction, he hath prepared the furrow. Go then, thou, and labour in the field of the Lord."

Thus said the angel, and left the prophet of Shilo.

And when Ahia came to Sion, messengers came to the king, saying: "Behold, Hadad the Edomite riseth up against thee, and much people is with him; and Rezin cometh against thee with horsemen and chariots, and also thy servant Jeroboam is thy antagonist, and lifteth up his hand against thee; and the land is full of complaints against thy son Rehoboam, who ceaseth not to do evil, and the people say: 'What part have we in David, or what inheritance have we in the son of Jesse?'"

When the king heard these words, his heart was troubled, and he thought, I will appease Jehovah; and he sacrificed a great sin-offering to the Lord. But first he sent

for Ahia, to be present at the sacrifice, and to pray to Jehovah. And when the flame arose from the sacrifice, Solomon said to the man of God: "Pray to the Lord for me, that he may accept it mercifully, and turn away the evil from me."

Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Ahia, and he opened his mouth, and said: "Didst thou send for me that I might be the servant of thy sin and thy treachery? Now that the waters go over thy soul, wilt thou bribe Jehovah with the fat of oxen, and shall I be thy messenger? Son of man, the abomination which thou worshippest hath ensnared thy heart. Thinkest thou that He who filleth heaven and earth is a blood-thirsty idol like Moloch, or a slave of his lust, like Solomon? Let me return into the desert."

Thus said the prophet, and departed. But the king was contrite, went into his chamber, put on sackcloth, and wept all day and all night. Then the angel of the Lord came to the prophet, saying: "Go to Solomon. Truth hath broken his heart, like as the ploughshare breaketh the clod; and tears are flowing from his eyes, like as the dew descendeth from heaven. Arise, and sow the seed in the furrow!"

Then there came messengers from the king, and Ahia went with them. And when Solomon saw him, he said: "Alas, Ahia, my soul is sorrowful even unto death; for thy mouth hath spoken the truth,—but it burneth on my heart like a live coal, and a fire is in the land which will destroy Israel; and behold, my only son is among the destroyers."



Then the prophet said: "Dost thou think, O king, that I am able to root out the germ of thy sins? Will the arrow return unto the bow-string which sent it forth?"

Then Solomon sighed, and said: "Alas, reconcile me to the God who speaketh within me, and restore peace to my heart."

The prophet said: "That must be thy work. But arise, anoint thy head, and offer sacrifice unto the Lord."

Then Solomon anointed his head, and put on his royal robes, and they went forth to Mount Sion to offer sacrifice unto the Lord.

Now, when the flames rose up toward heaven, and consumed the offering, the seer of Shilo came to the king, and said: "Behold, the word of the Lord cometh to thee from the flame. Thou hast acknowledged the truth, and her fiery glow burneth in thy heart. Let it become a flame to the Lord, consuming what is earthly, and ascending to heaven."

Thus said the prophet of Shilo. Then the music of the harps and of the singers of the temple began: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, that was, that is, and shall be! All nations are filled with his glory."

And the sacred song floated through the halls of the sanctuary.

But Solomon lay on his face, and wept and prayed.

ALCIBIADES AND SOCRATES.

ALCIBIADES jested one day, as was sometimes his wont, with his beloved tutor Socrates, and said: "Thou art the strangest among men. All Athens, save only the sophists and thy enemies among the covetous and unjust rulers, call thee the 'wise;' and even these acknowledge thee as such in secret, though shame forbids them to confess it openly. Now I have long endeavoured to learn of thee the art by which thou dost turn all minds towards thee, that all respect thee, even those by whom thou art hated and feared. But all my endeavours have not availed; for always, when I think I have fathomed thee, thou dost escape from me."

Socrates answered with a smile: "But a short time past thou didst compare me to the statues of the satyrs; now thou thinkest even to do me honour by ranking me with the animal which is the companion of Æsculapius, coiling itself round his staff. I should not regard it if it concerned only the power of healing, and if the name of the animal were not fraught with thoughts of its venomous fang."

"Here thou judgest thyself," interrupted Alcibiades; "thou art proud, O Socrates!"

"Truly," answered Socrates, "hast thou understood me."

"Yes," answered the disciple of the philosopher, "thou art proud. Therefore thou speakest of a divine spirit that

dwelleth in thee, and revealeth to thee the truth. And what a mysterious veil dost thou draw about thyself and thy words, if any one approaches thee who pleaseth thee not! But, and that is the worst and the most incomprehensible, thou art nevertheless modest as a child, and wilt not owe thy wisdom to thyself. In short, thou art unfathomable, and full of contradictions, thou marvellous man!"

"Not so," replied the philosopher. "Look upon the sun. Is not he the brightest star? And yet he attracts mists and vapours, rolling them into terrible thunder-clouds, behind which he hides his countenance. But he lifts up also the dew-drop — after having reflected himself in it, and given it the lustre of a jewel — to form the celestial arch."

Then Alcibiades said: "In future, then, I must compare thee to the sun, or to his leader, Phœbus Apollo. At the first feast, I shall reform my fault."

"If I suffered this, my Alcibiades," answered Socrates, "thou wouldst with reason call me proud, and contradict thyself in ascribing child-like modesty to me."

Alcibiades replied: "Then must I choose the medium, and compare thee to Eos."

"How wouldst thou do this?" asked the other. And Alcibiades replied: "She announces silently, yet radiantly, the approach of the glorious god of the sun; but so soon as he himself appears, she bows down before him as her superior. At the end of his glorious career she opens for him the gates of heaven; but when the dark night appears, she ascends brightly to her silent abode."

Socrates smiled, and said: "Here thou hast found at once the way to gain the esteem of the good, and to keep the evil in awe. Be proud in the consciousness of thy human worth and mission in the presence of thy superior."

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## THE COMBAT WITH THE LION.

THE royal spouse of a mighty sovereign in the East came one morning to her consort, weeping with rage, and invoking revenge against a criminal, and an offender of royal majesty. "Behold," said she, "the wicked one brought me a set of jewels, but the stones were found to be false. Already doth he expiate his crime in a deep dungeon, but his life shall pay for the theft. I demand, O king, that he be condemned to fight with a lion."

"Oh, let us not judge in anger," replied the monarch. "How should anger and justice meet together? It behoves a prince of the people to be free from every passion. Is he not the image and the vicegerent of the Most High?"

"Doth not God rage in the tempest?" asked the queen.

"Not so," answered the king; "he does good even in the tempest. Alas, my beloved, man is only too prone to lower the Eternal to his own standard."

But the queen's wrath increased, and she said: "God hates and punishes the evil-doer, and not in vain did he give the sword to kings. I demand no more than that justice be done on the transgressor. Death has been announced to him; there is no drawing back."



"It is well," said the king; "let it be so to-morrow."

The next day, when the trumpets and timbrels announced the hour of the sanguinary spectacle, the queen set forth with a splendid retinue, rejoicing in her heart in the triumph of her anger; for revenge is a cooling draught of water to the inflamed mind.

The herald opened the lists, the criminal stood trembling in the arena, and the timbrels and trumpets resounded again.

But behold, instead of the lion, a gentle white lamb came forth, and confidently approached the trembling man. The trumpets and timbrels ceased, and a sweet music of harps and flutes began; and the lamb lay down at the feet of the criminal, and looked up in his face.

Then the queen looked at her royal consort, and blushed. The king said: "Thy look, my beloved, bears me witness that I have well exercised the right of retaliation. He who deceived thee has been deceived, and in lieu of the ignoble thou receivest what is noble. The blush of thy cheeks, which seems to me more beautiful than the royal purple that adorns thee, bears witness to me that I have acted as the image and vicerent of the Most High."

Now the trumpets proclaimed the end of the spectacle, and the people shouted: "Hail to our king and queen!"



## PATMOS.

WHEN St. John, exiled by the crowned tyrant, had landed on Patmos, he threw himself down on a rock, and sorrowed through many hours of the night.

Suddenly the darkness was dispelled, and, surrounded by a halo of rosy light, the two guardian angels of the beloved disciple, Raphael and Salem, appeared before the mourner; and the grey rock gleamed like a cloud in the evening sky.

"Why mournest thou, John?" asked the heavenly spirits.

He answered and said: "The events of the day press heavily upon my soul. The tyrant murders thousands of those who confess the truth. The friends of our risen Lord are scattered, and I must be far from them."

Salem smiled, and said: "Didst thou not stand on Golgotha when the Holy One gave up the ghost, and after three days by the empty sepulchre?"

"I know," answered the Apostle, "that the truth will come off victorious from the strife, — the gates of hell will not prevail against it. But this separation from the friends and witnesses of the truth, whom I love, — alas! I see nothing but the miseries of the present time."

"Courage!" said Raphael; "when the present oppresses thy spirit so grievously. Though I cannot give thee the wings of the seraph so long as thou dwellest on earth; yet — thou shalt not have need of them."



Thus said Raphael, and touched the forehead of the exile. Then his eyes were opened. He gazed athwart the dark clouds and saw the sanctuary of heaven; he heard the music of the spheres, and beheld truth triumphant in the glory of heaven. Salem gave him the harp, and bestowed upon him the beauteous gift of prophecy.

Then the inspired Apostle felt no more the trammels of the narrow sea-girt Patmos.



### ADAM AND THE CHERUB OF PARADISE.

WHEN Abel lay bathed in his blood, and Adam stood weeping beside his murdered son, the cherub of Paradise appeared to the father of the human race, and stood silently by his side. With an earnest brow Adam lifted up his face, and said: "Is this an image of the race, the fruit of my loins? Will the earth again be stained by the blood of a brother, shed by a brother's hand?"

The cherub answered: "Thou sayest it."

"Alas, by what name will this dreadful deed be called?" asked Adam.

A tear glistened in the eye of the heavenly spirit as he answered: "War!"

Then the father of mankind shuddered, sighed, and said: "Alas, why must the good and righteous fall by the hand of the unrighteous?"

The cherub was mute.



But Adam continued to complain, saying: "What consolation is left me in my misery on this blood-stained earth?"

The cherub answered and said: "To raise thine eyes to heaven!" And he disappeared.

Adam departed not till the sun had set. When the stars rose, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and cried: "O ye luminous watchers at the gates of heaven, why wander ye so silently? If mortal man may hear the sound of your voice, oh, speak of the land on *that* side, and of beloved Abel."

Then a solemn calmness prevailed, and Adam fell on his face and worshipped; and lo, he heard in his heart a still voice: "Behold, Abel thy son liveth."

Then he was comforted, and his soul had peace.

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### ELIAB.

IN the holy land lived a man called Eliab, whom God had blessed with earthly goods; he was also cunning in all the wisdom of the east. But all this could not bring peace to his heart; therefore he was often full of sorrow and wished to die, for he said: "What is life but a continual course of changes? and yet it is always the same; man lives in perpetual strife, and his days are like those of a labourer."

Then a man of God came to him, and showed him an



herb possessed of wonderful powers of healing ; but Eliab said : " What is that to me ? My body lacks not health, but my soul is diseased. It were better for me to die."

" The herb will do thy heart good," said the man of God. " Take it, and heal seven sick men, and then thou mayest die, if thou wilt."

Eliab did as he was desired, and sought out misery in its abiding places. He healed seven sick people, and succoured the poor with his riches.

Then the man of God came again to him, and said : " Here is an herb of death ; now thou mayest die."

But Eliab cried : " God forbid ! My soul longeth no more for death ; for now I comprehend the meaning and use of life."

The man of God smiled, and said : " I knew it ; for now that thou art conscious of thy divine nature, which formerly was hidden from thee, how couldst thou think selfishly of the instability of human life ?"

Then Eliab said to the man of God : " Thy wisdom hath given peace to my soul, but my doings appear small and insignificant. I am indeed able to relieve the outward wants of the poor and miserable,—I can brighten their huts with my abundance ; but their hearts are closed against me."

" Blessed art thou," answered the man of God : " thou givest thy gifts humbly, thou shalt receive the higher reward."

After these words he took Eliab into his garden, to a rose-bush. The land was dry from want of rain, the rose-



bush withered in the sandy soil, and its buds were drooping towards the earth.

The man of God bade Eliab go to the fountain and fill a vessel with water. Eliab did as he was commanded, and watered the rose-bush. And the bush regained its strength and its verdure, and after a little while the buds revived and bloomed, and exhaled sweet odours.

“Behold,” said the man of God, “thus also the poor, whom thou hast refreshed, lift up their faces with beaming gratitude and love to God, and look with cheerful confidence upon mankind; for thou hast been to them a kind messenger from God and man.”

“How must I bestow charity?” asked Eliab.

Then the man of God answered: “In humility like a man, invisibly like God.”

“But if he whom I have helped stands before me to thank me?” said Eliab.

The man of God answered: “Then let thy hand be like the hand of a brother, and let the breath of thy mouth disclose to him the heaven of thy heart that sends the benefit.”

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## NATHANAEL.

In the land of Galilee, in a valley among the mountains, dwelt a man called Nathanael, who was old and well-stricken in years. But on his countenance dwelt cheerfulness and grace, and no deceit was found in his heart.

Therefore the inhabitants of the valley said: "A spirit of kindness resteth on Nathanael."

He went about in the valley to see where he might do good; he assisted the poor to build their huts for a shelter against the severity of winter, and to plant trees for shadow and refreshment during the heat of summer; and he taught them to cultivate the field, so that the ground brought forth fruit in abundance.

And wherever there was a marshy place, he said: "Not so; let it no longer poison the air." And he contrived to dry the sluggish marsh, that herbs for the cattle, and corn for the use of men, grew in its place.

And wherever he found a waste field and barren heath, he stood still, and said: "Behold how the land mourneth, longing for the labour of men's hands!"

Then he went, dug, planted, and sowed; and all things prospered with him; for Nathanael was pious, and of a childlike mind; therefore he prospered in all that he did, and the land was subject to him, and obeyed him.

When spring came, the thrushes and nightingales were singing, and building their nests in the bushes which he had planted; and merry larks hovered over the corn-fields, which formerly had been bogs and fens, and the dwelling-places of toads and serpents.

All men praised and loved Nathanael, because they derived pleasure and benefit from his works. But his mind was hidden from them, and only a few penetrated into Nathanael's calm, quiet soul.

For self-interest comprehends not how the divine can appear in lowliness, vaunting not itself.

Suddenly a war came over the land ; the people of the west broke forth like the locusts, for a judgment upon Israel, which had gone astray ; and they came into the valley of Galilee.

Then the angel, who in the stillness of night bedews the flowers and shrubs with glittering drops, came to the angel of death, saying : " Behold, my brother, Nathanael is an Israelite indeed, and without guile. Why should he see the misery which will come over Israel ? Arise then, thou, lead him to the land of peace ; but let his passing away be gentle and peaceful as his life on earth has been."

After the angel of the flowers had spoken these words, he took his flight to the son of Nathanael, and appearing to him in a vision, he said : " Behold, thy father is about to be called home ; go to him, therefore, that he may not depart in solitude, and that thou mayest see the end of the righteous."

Then the son of Nathanael arose, and journeyed over the mountains through Samaria to Galilee ; for he dwelt at Jerusalem. And when he came into the valley to his father, he wept over him, and tended the dying man.

Then the old man felt as though the fragrance of the field was around him, when the dew is sparkling, and the sun darts down his beams on flowers and leaves. Nathanael's heart was gladdened by the embrace of his only son ; and he strengthened himself, and blessed him with kindly words.

Then the angel of death descended, and loosened with gentle hand the bonds of life.

And the spirit of the glorified Nathanael winged its flight to the habitations of everlasting peace, and the joys that withered for him on earth, bloom for him in heaven.



### THE CEDARS OF LEBANON.

HIRAM, king of Tyre, and Solomon, king of Israel, were walking together in the cedar-forest on Lebanon. Hand in hand the two kings walked under the fragrant shade of the lofty wood, and Hiram rejoiced in the wise sayings of the king of Israel.

Beneath their feet lay spread out the land, blooming in peace and happiness; for Hiram and Solomon had made a covenant, and were friends; thus also their subjects were friends with one another. And the kings stood still, and looked into the distance.

Then Hiram, the sovereign of Tyre, opened his mouth and said: "Blessed are we that are friends. Are we not like cedars on the heights, with our people round about?"

And Solomon answered and said: "The cedar is rightly called the royal tree. It is the highest of all trees, and its form is full of majesty. It grows on the summit of the mountain, drinking from the clouds, and needs not the brook that murmurs at its foot. Its roots grasp the rocks in the bowels of the earth, and its top is bathed in the blue sky. The storm has been raging for centuries about these trees, and the thunders have rolled over the brow of



this dark forest;—yet it stands unshaken, firm, and free, like a god, without the wants of the low valley. Therefore the cedar is called the tree of God, planted by Jehovah, and an image of the anointed of the Most High.”

“One thing is wanting,” said Hiram; “the fragrant flower, and the refreshing strengthening fruit.”

Then Solomon smiled, and said: “Speakest thou in jest, Hiram, or as the monarch of a trading nation? Is not the whole cedar fragrant? And why should the towering queen of the forest bear a refreshing fruit? Doth she not carry the daring sailor over the surging billows? Doth she not furnish the palaces of kings? And soon, Hiram, she will stand on Sion, a temple to Jehovah. My friend, there are nobler fruits than those which are sweet to the taste.”

As they were conversing thus, a tempest arose over Lebanon, and the thunder rolled terribly. The kings stood in a thicket of the forest, silent and full of awe. Suddenly a flash of lightning descended from the clouds, rending a cedar from the crown even to the roots. With a loud crash the tree fell down the precipice of the rock. Then the hurricane passed on.

The kings drew near to the fallen cedar, and said: “What is earthly greatness in the eyes of the Almighty? He rolleth up the heavens like a garment, and the earth is before him as a drop of water in a vessel. Who may stand before the King of kings?”

When they had stood awhile in deep and silent thought by the shattered cedar, Hiram said: “After having seen Nature in her terrible greatness, it seemeth almost foolish



to build a temple to the Lord of Creation. What need hath he of a temple made by man's hands?"

"Not he," answered Solomon—"but man needs it. The stupendous work of creation bows him down, and makes him like unto the dust, whereof his body was fashioned. His own work—which, as it were, contains and surrounds the Invisible Omnipresent—elevates him. The flesh and bones of the body are not the spirit of man. Hiram, we also are of a divine nature."

The kings were silent for a long time. Then the monarch of Tyre said: "Alas! the life of kings is like the cedar before the tempest."

"Be it so," replied Solomon: "may it be also like unto the cedar after the tempest! Dost thou perceive the fragrance, Hiram, which the cedar sheds now in death through the forest?"



## ZACCHEUS.

ZACCHEUS, the chief of the publicans, dwelt at Jericho, in the Holy Land, for several years after he had seen the Lord from the mulberry-tree. He was small in stature, but his life was humble and pious before God and man; he did good to the poor, and dealt with no man deceitfully. Every morning, when the sun rose, he went out into the fields before Jericho; and when he came back, he began his daily work with calm and cheerful mind.

When his wife and his friends knew this, they said to each other: "Whither doth he go each morning? Let us follow him, that we may see what he is doing. For it is indeed profitable to search the ways of a pious man."

So they said; and set out early in the morning, his wife and his friends, and followed him secretly. Then they saw that he went to the mulberry-tree, where he had seen the Lord; and they hid themselves behind the bushes. It was a sultry day in the time of harvest.

As they stood there, they saw that Zaccheus took out a pitcher, drew water, watered the root of the tree, and pulled up the weeds, and tended the tree carefully. And after he had done all this, he looked at the tree with a kind smile, and returned to Jericho.

Then his friends came forth from the trees, and smiled, and said: "Behold, Zaccheus, we have discovered thy secret doings. We could not imagine wherefore thou wentest forth every morning so early, we knew not whither. Why dost thou not send one of thy servants to take care of the tree, which thou seemest so to love?"

Zaccheus answered and said: "You have not done well to search my doings and my feelings, which you cannot share. Feelings like these are engendered in secret, and love secrecy. But, my beloved, let me still have the grateful care of this tree; for it was the tree which brought me to Him and to peace."

## THE HYACINTH.

EMILY was sorry that the winter lasted so long; for she loved flowers, and had a little garden, where she tended the very beautiful ones with her own hands. Therefore she longed for spring, and that winter might pass.

One day, her father said: "Look here, Emily; I have brought you a bulb, which you must plant and rear carefully."

"How can I, dear father?" answered the girl. "The ground is as hard as a stone, and covered with snow."

Thus she said; for she did not know that bulbs will grow in flower-pots and glasses, because she had never seen it before.

Her father gave her a flower-pot filled with mould, and Emily put the bulb into it. But she looked at her father and smiled, doubting whether her father had spoken in earnest or not. For she fancied the blue sky must smile on the flower, and spring-breezes fan it; that so much beauty could not come forth from under her hands.

For infantile simplicity and humility desire not that any extraordinary thing should take place for their gratification.

After a few days, the earth swelled in the pot; little green leaves separated it with their points, and appeared above it. Then Emily was delighted, and announced to her father and mother, and the whole house, the birth of

the young plant. The parents smiled, and said: "We shall now see her taking care of her plant as of a child, loving and hoping in silence. So we shall be delighted with Emily, as she is with her flower."

Carefully Emily watered the plant, and smiled with joy on perceiving its growth.

Her father looked at her, and said: "Well done, my child; sunshine must follow after rain and dew. The kind glance of the eye gives value to the good action which the hand performs. Your little plant will prosper, Emily."

Presently the leaves came quite out of the earth, and glowed in their verdant freshness. Then Emily's joy increased. "Oh!" said she, from the fullness of her heart, "I shall be content, even if no flower should come."

"Contented spirit!" said the father. "You will receive more than you dare to hope for. This is the reward of modesty." He showed now the bud of the flower, which was concealed between the leaves.

Emily's care and love increased day by day with the gradual development of the flower. With tender hands she sprinkled water on it, asking whether it was enough or too much, or whether it might be too cold. When a sunbeam stole through the windows, she would gently carry the plant into the sunshine, and breathe on the leaves to take off the dust, as the morning breeze passes over the rose.

"Oh, sweet union of tenderest love and innocence!" said the mother. "The purer the soul, the more heavenly the love will be."

The flower was Emily's last thought in the evening, and



her first in the morning. Several times she beheld in dreams her hyacinth in full bloom; and when she saw herself disappointed in the morning, she was not troubled, but said, smiling: "It may still blossom!"

Sometimes she would ask her father in what colour the flower would appear, and after having rehearsed all colours, she said with cheerful voice: "It is immaterial to me, if it will only bloom."

"Sweet fancy," said the father; "how playfully and busily dost thou employ innocent love and infantile hope!"

At length the flower blossomed. Twelve buds opened early in the morning, hanging gracefully between five emerald green leaves, in fresh youthful beauty. Their colour was rosy, like the reflection of the morning sun, or the delicate flush on Emily's cheeks; and a balmy fragrance hung around each flower.

Emily could not comprehend so much beauty; her joy was silent and wordless. On her knees before the plant, she gazed intently on the newly-opened flowers.

Then her father entered, and seeing his beloved child and the blooming hyacinth, he said with emotion: "See, Emily, you are to us what the hyacinth is to you."

The young girl rose from her knees, and threw herself into her father's arms. After a fervent embrace, she said in a gentle voice: "O my father, could I but give you as much joy as the flower has given me!"



## THE TWO WAYS.

IN a village on the Rhine, a schoolmaster was one day teaching in his school, and the sons and daughters of the villagers sat around listening with pleasure, for his teaching was healthful and kindly. He was speaking of the good and bad conscience, and of the still voice of the heart. After he had finished speaking, he asked his pupils: "Who among you is able to tell me a parable on this matter?"

One of the boys stood forth, and said: "I think I can tell a parable, but I do not know whether it be right."

"Speak in your own words," answered the master. And the boy began: "I compare the calmness of a good conscience, and the disquietude of an evil one, to two ways on which I walked once. When the enemy passed through our village, the soldiers carried off by force my dear father and our horse. When my father did not come back, my mother and all of us wept and mourned bitterly, and she sent me to the town to inquire for my father. I went; but late at night I came back sorrowfully, for I had not found my father. It was a dark night in autumn. The wind roared and howled in the oaks and firs, and between the rocks; the night-ravens and owls were shrieking and hooting. And I thought in my soul how we had lost my father, and of the misery of my mother when she should see me return alone. A strange trembling seized me in



the dreary night, and each rustling leaf terrified me. Then I thought to myself,—such must be the feelings of a man's heart who has a bad conscience."

"My children," said the master, "would you like to walk in the darkness of night, seeking in vain for your dear father, and hearing naught but the roar of the storm, and the screams of the beasts of prey?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed all the children, shuddering.

Then the boy resumed his tale, and said: "Another time I went the same way with my sister; we had been fetching many nice things from town for a feast, which our father was secretly preparing for our mother, to surprise her the next day. It was late when we returned; but it was in spring; the sky was bright and clear, and all was so calm, that we could hear the gentle murmur of the rivulet by the way, and on all sides the nightingales were singing. I was walking hand in hand with my sister; but we were so delighted that we hardly liked to speak. Then our good father came to meet us. Now I thought again by myself,—such must be the state of the man who has done much good."

When the boy had finished his tale, the master looked kindly at the children, and they said unanimously: "Yes, we will become good men!"

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## SPRING.

A pious boy, the blooming child of a countryman, walked in the beginning of spring in the fields, and his heart rejoiced at the glory of the renewed year.

After he had been wandering for a long time, he sat down to rest on a hill by the side of a murmuring rivulet, looking around with feelings of devotion and love, and a heart swelling with emotion. Suddenly he heard a gentle rustling in the bushes by the side of the hill; a youth of noble mien stepped forth, approached the hill, and sat down by the side of the musing boy.

"On what dost thou muse, my friend?" said he to him; "and why art thou so serious in the bloom of thy life?"

The boy answered: "Strange feelings are in my heart: the glory of the coming spring gladdens me; but it is a silent joy, mingled with sadness and secret awe. Behold, I feel as if I were in a temple."

"Art thou not in a temple?" said the youth, his large blue eye beaming with brighter lustre. "But," continued he, "what is it that chiefly fills your heart with these feelings?"

The boy answered: "The quiet course of nature, and the calmness with which all this glory is brought to pass, as it were of itself. When the snow was still in the dells, and the ground hard with the night frost, then spring already announced his approach. He sent his prophetess

the lark. She flew up from the furrow to the skies, as if by her song she would call the slumbering germ of life to a joyful awaking, and bid careless men give heed unto the breath that wondrously renews all things of earth. For does she not soar warbling between heaven and earth? The brown plumage of the messenger of spring does not betray that a prophetic voice is in her bosom, and many do not know it."

"That is the lot of the divine in its simple form," said the youth. "But continue, dear boy, to tell me the history of spring."

The boy said: "Numberless lives, obedient to the call, were roused in the lap of the maternal earth, now freed from frost. The snowdrops appeared like blooming flakes, and in clusters; as if, when united, they did not fear the returning storm and frost. On the sunny side of the hill, protected by briars, and only visible to the attentive eye, bloomed the modest, fragrant violet—a gladdening sign that the early prophetess had spoken the truth. And how powerfully did then the breath of spring pervade the whole of nature, renewing the face of the earth! The smallest and most delicate thing was regarded as much as the greatest; even the hidden bud, and the folded leaf, have their dawn and their sunrise. Is it not one and the same power which manifests itself in the plants as a flower, and reigns in the bosom of the thrush and the lark as a voice of melody?

"Thus blossom was added to blossom, and song to song; and soon," said the boy, with beaming eyes, "I doubt not but that the nightingale will complete the choral song

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which accompanies the progressive development of Nature's powers."

"Blessed art thou, beloved one," said the youth, "that thou seest the hand of Nature even in her silent and gentle agency."

"Alas," answered the boy sadly, "since war devastated our fields, I turned my eyes upon peaceful, benevolent Nature, and she seemed to me a spirit of consolation. For, behold, the war has robbed us of our flocks."

Then spoke the youth: "Mourn not for thy flocks! Even the spring is heralded by tempests. A little was taken from thee, that what is greater might be bestowed. The chrysalis must burst, before the butterfly can soar forth. Blessed art thou," continued he, after a little while, "that thou dost acknowledge the father of Nature, who sendeth the spring."

"But, ah! tell me," asked the boy, "why does he send him so secretly, and almost imperceptibly? Why does all this glory come as though it arose out of itself? For this cause, men pass by and do not heed it. Nay, they even crush the blades and the flowers, and stain them with the blood of their brethren. If they heard the breath which renews the earth, and saw the power which forms it all,—oh, pardon me, kind youth,—then I ween there would be no more war; but love and gratitude would wander hand in hand amid the blooming fields, like children in the sight of their seen father."

The youth answered, smiling: "Thou mayest think thus in thy innocence. But love, too, and gratitude, are of divine nature. Therefore they are engendered and nour-

ished secretly in the heart, as spring is developed in nature."

"Oh, then will I keep to nature and the invisible father, and not to the ways of the men of this world," exclaimed the boy, looking up to heaven.

"Then thou wilt soon learn to acknowledge in the father of nature, the father of mankind," said the youth, earnestly and with dignity. "I go," continued he; "peace be with thee! Behold, in thy heart also sounds the prophet-voice of a celestial spring. Thou hast sought the divine in Nature; thou hast found it, and shalt find it again in higher lustre, and in purer harmony. I am the angel of spring!"

When the youth had spoken thus, he vanished from the eyes of the boy like a ray of light.

The wondering boy saw him no more; but a gentle breeze stirred the trees of the forest, the branches trembled, the buds opened, the voice of the nightingale was heard for the first time, and the boy himself stood there changed—a vigorous youth.



## THE CATCHING OF THE BUTTERFLY.

EARLY one morning in summer little William came running into his father's garden to gather from his own flower-bed a nosegay of carnations and stocks, as a present for his mother, because it was her birthday.

When he entered the garden he espied a beautiful butterfly fluttering to and fro. Then the boy forgot his mother and his flowers, and tried to catch the pretty insect.

At first he followed it, crouching, and with cautious steps, to seize it unawares; but with each step his desire to possess it increased, and the little creature appeared more beautiful in shape and colours, the longer he pursued it.

At length it descended on a little fruit-tree, which blossomed for the first time. This tree grew close to William's flower-bed, and had likewise been given to him by his father; for this reason, and because it was small and had a beautiful crown, the boy loved it dearly.

When he perceived the butterfly reposing on a blossom of the tree, he approached hastily, and flung his hat so violently over the insect on the tree, that all the blossoms were scattered to the ground, and two branches were torn off.

Startled and confused, William looked to the ground, where the branches lay at his feet, and perceived that he had trodden down all his hyacinths, stocks, and pinks, and the butterfly was lying before him torn and dead.

Then William returned home weeping and mourning, without butterfly and without flowers,—a picture of sensual passion grasping at joy.



## THE ROSE AND THE LILY.

MALVINA stood with her father before a lily, which bloomed under a rose-bush. Of dazzling whiteness, like a ray of light, the beautiful flower reared its open, balmy bell. Over it dropped a large full-blown rose, diffusing a soft roseate hue over the delicate silvery petals of the lily, and thus also the odours of the two flowers blended into one.

“Oh, what a beautiful union !” cried Malvina, and looked smiling on the flowers.

"It is the union of innocence and love," replied the father. Thus they stood in silence before the flowers.

Now Oscar, Malvina's silent lover, entered the garden; a rosy blush mantled the cheeks of Malvina, like the lustre of the rose spread over the lily.

Her father looked upon her, and said: "Have not the flowers a language and an expression, Malvina?"

"For innocence and love," added Oscar.

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## THE DAWN OF DAY.

EARLY, at daybreak, the wise Hillel was walking with his disciples near Mount Hermon. They discoursed together about the belief in a higher world, and upon the wisdom of God.

Then his disciples asked him, saying: "Rabbi, unto what dost thou liken the wisdom of God?"

Hillel lifted up his hand, and said: "Behold, there glows her glorious image,—the dawn! Mist and twilight still hang upon mountain and valley, the earth is hushed in mute expectation, but already the gates of heaven are silently and gradually opening."

"We understand," said the disciples; "divine wisdom comes from above, and approaches the silent, humble believer."

And again Hillel lifted up his hand towards the dawn of day, and said: "Behold, now it descends lovingly towards the dark, slumbering world! A soft, lovely tint is

poured over hill and dale, and dead creation shines in supernatural lustre."

"Nature receives meaning and expression," said his disciples.

"Behold," continued their master, "how the gently undulating streams of light rest on the earth, like a band that unites it to heaven!"

"And man to God," murmured his disciples.

"The dawn displays not the full splendour of day—a solemn twilight yet surrounds it; but, by its mild beams, that inexhaustible source of light is revealed which is concealed by this veil. We nightly wanderers look up with confidence and joy towards the dawn; for we know that it brings the new day. Do you perceive how fragrance is wafted from Hermon, how the strengthened herbs blossom anew, and how the flowers bloom in the beam of the opening day? Born in the lap of morning, the dew descended upon them; now it glitters on each leaf and blade, like pearls from the East."

"Thus faith begets love," whispered the disciples.

"And likewise light and strength," answered Hillel. "Lift up your eyes," he continued, stretching out his arm towards the sun, "now he sends forth the young day. Strengthened by his paternal care, his head surrounded with golden beams, he runs his course full of vigour and courage, and clouds and storms have no dominion over him."

"An image of the man whose heart is filled with divine wisdom," exclaimed the disciples.

"On his high celestial path," continued Hillel, "he



walks, the son of the morning, serene in grandeur, scattering innumerable blessings. When he has finished his course, before the night comes, the evening sun appears, and receives him in paternal embrace to his bosom."



## A S A P H.

ASAPH, the skilful singer and player on the lute, was sitting at the hour of midnight in the upper room of his house. His harp was before him, illumed by the rays of the moon, and his face glowed; for he was meditating on a psalm to sing unto the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth, and all that therein is. Thus Asaph sat and mused, leaning on his harp. Then he said: "I will ascend to the roof of the house, to see the glory of the starry sky; then my song will flow in nobler strains."

Thus he said, and took his harp to the house-top, and looked up to heaven, and beheld Orion, and the Bear, and the Pleiads, the stars towards the south, and the whole host of heaven, silently moving on their course with eternal lustre. And below lay the holy city, and the valleys and mountains, in the light of the moon; men were sleeping calmly in the dead stillness of midnight. And the night-wind breathed on his harp, and the strings vibrated; but Asaph was mute, and rested his head on his harp and wept.

When the day dawned, the people ascended the holy

mountain, and the sound of the multitude was heard ; then Asaph descended, and touched the strings of his harp, and on the wings of music his spirit rose above the din of the world.



### THE VALLEY OF THE BRAHMINS.

IN one of the most beautiful regions of India, under an ever-cloudless sky, there is a peaceful valley, hemmed in by mountains on every side. Here dwelt a race, united, as it were, into one family, who had from ancient times worshipped the invisible God, under the name of Brahma, in simplicity and in love.

Once a young Indian prince came over the mountains into the valley, and demanded to speak to the chief and father of the friendly tribe of Brahmins.

A venerable old man of high and noble stature received the unknown youth. "Thou art welcome," said he, "young stranger, to our peaceful valley, whether thy coming be intentional, or if thou hast lost thy way."

"The first is the case," said the youth ; "I come intentionally."

The old man interrupted him, saying, "All strangers are welcome in our valley. We practise the holy duty of hospitality towards every man, without asking who he is, or wherefore he comes ; for we keep to the old custom, not to inquire until the third day has passed, as to the name or

the designs of the stranger. If, therefore, thy necessity demands not our instant help, join our society as a man and brother, and enjoy with cheerful heart what we are able to offer thee."

The young prince bowed his head, and followed the old man to the cool shade of lofty palm-trees, where a numerous company was assembled.

Men and women, youths and virgins, all of noble and friendly appearance, came to meet the stranger; greeting him as cordially as if they had known and loved him for years. Children surrounded him, offering him flowers.

"Oh, what a dwelling-place of innocence and joy!" sighed the son of a monarch.

"They are always combined here," replied the old man; "for Brahma lives in our hearts, therefore our feelings wax not old; we behold him in each of his creatures and gifts, therefore we never lack joy, and know no wants which may not be gratified."

Here a deep involuntary sigh escaped from the breast of the youth.

"Thou art weary with thy journey," said the old man, giving a sign. Immediately two youths stepped forward, bringing a basin, to wash the stranger's feet; and two blooming virgins offered him the finest fruits of the valley.

The prince refused to have his feet washed.

"It is a sacred rite of hospitality," said the old man; "and a solace which the strong should duly and willingly administer to the weary traveller. Here is no difference of master or slave. In every wanderer we honour the human

countenance, which announces him to be the son of **Brahma** the loving."

The prince was silent; but a burning blush mantled his cheek, and his knees trembled.

"He is faint," said the youths who had been preparing a bath for him; "he trembles."

"He has not tasted our fruit," said the virgins compassionately.

The old man approached him, and took his trembling hand. "My son," said he, "thou art faint with the heat of the day. I will conduct thee to our habitation, that thou mayest enjoy repose. Sleep will invigorate thee, and thou shalt rejoice with us at the sacred feast which we celebrate to-morrow."

The youth suffered the kind old man to lead him to a hut. Here he found a couch prepared with fragrant herbs, and over these lay cloths dazzlingly white, like new-fallen snow.

"Behold," said the Brahmin, "here thou canst sleep in peace, for thou dost rest in the arms of the loving **Brahma**, who blesses this valley. This thou wilt see by the soft and balmy herbs on which thou art to repose; and the snow-white coverings are an emblem of innocence."

While the old man was speaking, two boys entered, carrying a vessel filled with dark red wine. The Brahmin took it from their hands, and said to the prince: "Behold, we eat the fruits of the field, of the trees, and the vine, such as nature gives them; but for the sick and the weary we press the grape. It is the only blood," added he, smiling, "which we shed; but it costs no sigh, and is done

to soothe sighs. Drink, my friend; it will gladden thy heart."

The youth took the vessel with trembling hands; and as he drank, a violent agitation seized him.

When he returned the vessel to the old man, he heard, at a distance, a soft and solemn song of many voices.

"What does this mean?" asked the prince.

"It is our evening song," answered the Brahmin; "the sun is setting. We give our united thanks to Brahma for the light of heaven which he sheds on us, and for the day of life which he has granted. We believe that the prayer of joy and love is acceptable in the sight of the being who giveth light, and every other blessing; therefore we offer up our thanks by singing in unison. Thou also shalt not be forgotten in our prayers, for dost thou not now belong to our family? May Brahma give thee a tranquil sleep, and a joyful awaking!" Thus said the old man, with graceful kindness, and left the prince; but he hid his face, and was not able to look into the noble countenance of the old man, or to return his salutation.

Now the youth was alone; but no sleep fell upon his eyelids. The blood seemed to boil in his veins; he heard the throbbing of his heart. The picture of the past day was incessantly before his soul; and as the picture grew brighter and clearer, so the darkness of his spirit increased. The calm moonlight night, with its silver rays stealing into his chamber through the murmuring leaves, seemed to him an eternity. He longed impatiently for the break of day. At length he sank into a feverish sleep, often disturbed by fearful dreams. With the first ray of the morning sun, he



awoke. A sweet song, chanted alternately by male and female voices, was heard at a distance, sounding more solemn and serious than the hymn of the previous evening. It was the united morning-prayer of the Brahmin family at the rising of the sun. The prince was inexpressibly moved. He longed to join the general prayer, but he could not.

The door of the chamber was softly opened, and the old man entered. Anxious concerning the youth, whom he believed to be ill, he had not been able to await his coming. He intended to withdraw gently, in case he should find his guest asleep. When he found the stranger awake, he saluted him with kind words, and inquired with fatherly anxiety after his health.

The youth was deeply touched, and said: "How much kindness and love do I find in this valley!"

"My son," said the Brahmin, "we worship one great Father, and love each of his creatures as a work of his wisdom and goodness; but especially do we regard each human being as his image, and seek to do good to all, so far as in us lies. Reared from our earliest infancy in singleness of heart, and in this childlike faith, it has become our nature, and we accept no thanks, having no claim to any. Now shalt thou celebrate with us the joyful festival of love."

The old man had scarcely finished, when the youth burst into tears, and begged that he would lead him out of the valley, on the way by which he had come.

The old man marvelled at the singular stranger, and

accompanied him in silence on the way which led out of the valley.

Then the youth began : "I leave your valley for ever. I hoped to find peace among you, but I suffered the most dreadful anguish."

"I do not comprehend thee," interrupted the Brahmin, and looked with astonishment at the youth. "In our peaceful valley?"

"Your valley, venerable father," cried the youth, "is the dwelling-place of peace and innocence."

"No tear is shed among us," said the old man with heavenly calmness, "save tears of joy and gratitude; no drop of blood stains the ground, and no sigh of injured innocence desecrates the breath of Brahma. The soil which bears and nourishes us, the air which surrounds us, is pure and spotless."

"But I," cried the prince, "am a polluted being; this it is that changes your harmless valley for me into a place of torture."

The old man was silent; but tears of compassion and pity flowed from his eyes on the unhappy youth.

They stood on the boundary of the valley. The youth began again : "Venerable father, thy mildness pierces my heart! Would that it could also heal it! Listen to my melancholy history :

"Behold in me the son of King Amandua; his throne and the sovereignty of India were destined for me. But these hands are stained with innocent blood. The only son of a widow fell by my sword. Blood and tears and sighs oppress me. The remembrance of my dreadful deed

terrified me ; I left the palace, hoping to find in your valley the rest for which I longed. I found the most bitter hours of my life. Your place became a torture to me ; your innocence seemed to reproach me bitterly with my guilt, and each kind look of love fell on the darkness of my heart like a flaming flash of lightning on the dreary shades of night. Alas, I brought myself—myself from whom I wished to escape—into these habitations of peace ! Pardon me ; and, if you can, pray for me. I go where I ought to be—to the Faquirs.”\*

With these words he left the Brahmin and the peaceful valley. For a long time the old man gazed after him as he ascended the mountain. Then he lifted up his hands in silent prayer to heaven, and returned to those who celebrated the sacred festival.



## TAMYRIS.

A YOUNG poet, endowed with splendid talents and creative faculties, joined himself to the disciples of Plato. His songs were praised by all who knew him, and Hellas looked to see in him another Sophocles or Pindar.

But the praises of the people overwhelmed him, and puffed him up, so that he began to speak with contempt of Hesiod and Æschylus, and other masters of song.

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\* A sect in India, whose adherents inflict on themselves the severest penances.



This grieved the wise Plato, and he wished to cure the soul of the vain youth.

"I should render my country a greater service," said he, "than if I conquered for her a province, — for the holy art of poetry was given to man to elevate him; but it abideth not in diseased minds."

One evening in spring the young poet came to Plato as he walked alone in the garden of Academe. The youth accosted the philosopher, saying: "I have nearly finished my poem, which shall delight Hellas, and gain for me the immortal laurel-wreath."

"I give thee joy," said Plato, "if thou succeedest."

"And wherefore should I not?" replied the youth hastily.

Plato answered: "The gift of song, dear youth, comes from the gods, and they alone can give success; but thou seemest not to think of them, but only of thyself."

*Youth.* I feel the divinity within me.

*Plato.* Better if thou didst feel thyself near the divinity.

*Youth.* Are not both things the same?

*Plato.* Not so. Now thou only speakest of thyself, and hast faith in thyself and in thine own strength. Were it not so, thou wouldst have made thy song in silence. To gain the praise of men and applause from the multitude is now thy only care. The sublime, dear youth, should go before the earthly.

*Youth.* I understand thee not, O Plato.

*Plato.* I will speak by the father of poets and seers, for though (as men say) thou dost not think him unrivalled,

yet he is the elder, and it beseemeth the young to give ear to the old.

*Youth.* Be it so; though he will never be an ideal of sublimity to me. Speak!

*Plato.* He teaches us many a wise doctrine in his old legends, which thou wilt not refuse. Hear one of these.

Plato led the youth into a fragrant bower; they sat down, and the philosopher began: "Tamyris, the graceful poet of Thrace, came to King Eurytas, who rewarded him magnificently for his songs, and honoured him as the favourite of the Muses.

"But royal praise and splendid rewards spoiled the noble poet. For he boasted in his arrogance that he would gain the victory in song, even if the Muses themselves were his rivals. The Muses, who at that time dwelt still among mortals, met him on his way, and chastised his presumption. They smote him with blindness; and alas, they also took from him the beauteous gift of song, and the cunning of his sounding harp."

"How could the gods," asked the youth, "thus contradict themselves by destroying the divine gift which they had bestowed on the poet?"

"Not they," replied Plato; "he himself destroyed it. With his arrogance began his blindness and his punishment. But hear," continued the philosopher, "what the old tradition adds. The Muses did not destroy the divine gift; they made the soul of Tamyris enter into a nightingale.

"Dost thou hear her singing around the plane-trees?

Dost thou know the favourite of the Muses? Her form is the simplest and least beautiful; she hides herself in the dark grove, and loves best to pour forth her melodious song in the silence of night. She knows not that the soul of a Tamyris dwells in her gentle bosom."

Plato was silent, and listened to the song of the nightingale. The youth rose with anger in his soul, and left the philosopher; and refusing the instruction of nature and wisdom, he returned again to the shades of Academe.

But the name of the youth is no longer known among the bards of Hellas.



## THE STORK'S NEST.

A PHILOSOPHER perceived a stork's nest on the roof of a rural cottage. He went to the owner, and said: "How can you suffer those birds to dwell over your head?"

"Why disturb the good-natured guests?" answered the peasant; "don't you know, that good luck and blessings will befall the house where they build their nest?"

"What superstition!" replied the philosopher, laughing.

"Well," said the other, "it may be superstition; but there will be already a blessing derived, if man learns

to be hospitable, even were it only towards a dumb creature."

Then said the philosopher: "You tolerate the stork, the swallow, and the blind-worm; \* why do you persecute the viper, the kite, and the marten?"

"How," replied the peasant, "should we honour what is evil, and expect a blessing by taking care of pernicious creatures?"

The philosopher departed, saying: "It is strange, that in the very errors of men the sacred voice of the heart is to be heard; and stranger that one cannot help honouring and respecting it even there."

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\* In some parts of Germany a belief prevails among the peasantry that good luck will attend the family near whose dwelling either of these creatures take up their abode. It is considered a particular privilege to have a stork's nest on the roof of the house or barn.



## THE LESSON.

ON a beautiful evening in spring a father said to his wife: "Let us go out into the fields and rest on the hill to enjoy the sight of the setting sun. It will be a lovely evening."

When his two children, a boy and a girl, heard this, they said: "We will go before you, and wait for you on the hill." And with these words they skipped on before.

Soon after the grave father and the kind mother followed them, talking of the beauties of creation and of their chil-

dren ; the father speaking from the treasure of his wisdom, the mother from the simplicity of her heart.

When they came to the hill, and ascended it, the children were there already, and ran joyously towards them with a white pet lamb, which they had taken with them.

When the sun went down in glory, the parents looked on with emotion. And the father lifted up his voice, and spoke to the children of the creation of the universe, of the host of the stars, and of the sublime Creator of nature, who has made heaven and earth, and the sea and all that therein is ; and he made them look at the sun in his glory, saying : “ It is a wondrous work of the Most High.” For he thought in his heart, “ It is now time to teach them heavenly wisdom.”

When the father had finished speaking, the children exclaimed suddenly : “ Oh, see, dear father and dear mother, how pretty — how lovely !”

They had adorned the lamb with flowers, like a bride, and it ate the herbs of the hill out of their hands.

The father looked at the mother, and shook his head with a grave gesture.

But the mother smiled, and said : “ Ah, my beloved, let them continue in their child-like simplicity. They need not yet the knowledge of rising and setting worlds, and the deep word of wisdom ; they need only love, and of them is the kingdom of heaven.”

Then the father and the mother caressed the two children, and rejoiced with them at the gaily-decked lamb.

## POOR LAZARUS.

ONE day, when poor Lazarus lay at the door of the rich man, while the dogs licked his sores, another poor man, a day-labourer, whose name was Zadok, passed that way, and beheld Lazarus in his misery. Then his heart was moved with compassion, and he said: "I can give thee nought; for I am poor like thee, and have many little children to feed. But I am free from disease; let me therefore share with the dogs, which alone seem to have compassion on thy misery, their care of thee, that they may no longer put me to shame."

Thus he said, and a tear glistened in the friendly eye of the charitable man. Then he reached his hand to poor Lazarus, and said: "Come with me, for I have a hut; there we will tend thee as best we may, and when my bread faileth, I will go and gather for thee the crumbs from the tables of the rich."

After he had spoken these words, Lazarus gave him his hand, and said: "I follow thee willingly; for thou art chosen for thy kind heart to open to me the gates of heaven, and to gladden the last hours of my life. I now need but little; yet how should I deprive thee of this blessing?"

They departed, and came to a solitary little hut, covered with rushes, and Zadok led Lazarus in; and the wife of Zadok bade him welcome, and prepared for him a couch of leaves and moss in the chamber. They led poor Laza-

rus in, and laid him on the bed; and Hannah, the wife of Zadok, brought a basin of milk, and offered it to him to drink.

But Lazarus said: "Give me a little water; for I am athirst, and a fire burneth in my veins." Then Hannah hastened to the spring, and brought fresh water; and Zadok cooled Lazarus' brow with a green olive-branch, which he waved over him.

And a deep sleep fell upon Lazarus; for it was very hot, and about the hour of noon. While he was sleeping, Zadok and Hannah fanned the flies from him, and cooled him. And Lazarus smiled in his sleep. Then Zadok and Hannah his wife looked at each other, and said in a low voice: "Oh, that he might recover with us!"

Thus Lazarus slept for several hours. When the day declined he awoke, and lifted up his eyes, and said: "You good people, how kindly do ye tend me! Never did I enjoy so sweet a slumber as I have slept among you in your hut. I dreamed that I was carried by angels. And is it not so? A good man, full of simplicity and love, is he not an angel of God on earth? Ye have prepared for me the sweetest and the most precious hours of my life. My heart is full of peace and bliss. Therefore I know that the hour of my departure is come; for the last hour of the poor man is to him the beginning and the foretaste of heavenly life."

Then Lazarus stretched out his hands to Zadok and Hannah, and fell asleep; and the holy angels carried his soul to the habitations of the blessed. Zadok and Hannah mourned for him, and buried him in peace.

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The spirit of Lazarus the departed became the guardian angel of Zadok and his wife Hannah ; and at their death, which happened on one and the same day, he hovered round their death-bed ; a gentle breeze cooled their brows, and they heard a sweet voice whispering : “ Whoso showeth mercy, to him shall mercy be shown.”

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## THE SEED OF LIBERTY.

“ ALAS, how the fate of my son Canaan grieveth me !” sighed Noah one day, in the presence of his sons Shem and Japheth.

Then Shem said : “ My father, may I speak a free word unto thee ?”

“ Speak, my son,” replied the old man ; “ even if it were to reproach me. The noble word of truth is fit for the free man. Truth is the flower of liberty.”

Then Shem answered modestly, and said : “ But, my father, if thou hast compassion on Canaan now, how couldst thou, when the unhappy one had derided thee, pronounce the curse upon him : ‘ Let Canaan be a servant of servants among his brethren !’ ”

“ Alas, my son,” answered Noah, “ not my paternal heart pronounced the hard word ; eternal justice and truth spoke by my lips. It was a divine word of prophecy.”

Then said Japheth : “ How should the All-merciful bring the curse of slavery on the newly-rising human race ? I comprehend thee not.”

The patriarch answered and said: "Not Jehovah! Did not Canaan's scorn and crime violate the most sacred duty, and tear the tenderest ties, the ties of peaceful, blooming domestic life? How could the sacred seed of liberty prosper when its germ is destroyed? Alas, how I pity thy fate, my son Canaan!" said the old man, with a heavy heart.

Then suddenly the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and said: "Cursed be Canaan; let him be a servant of servants among his brethren!"

And fear fell on those that stood around him, for they perceived that he had spoken the word of the Lord; and they held their peace.

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### THE DREAM OF CAIN.

WHEN Cain had gone into the far land towards the east, away from his parents, and wandered sorrowfully to and fro, his wife said to him: "Be of good cheer, my beloved; for I am about to bear thee a son, in whom thou shalt have joy,—and therefore his name shall be called Enoch."

Thus she said; but Cain was lost in sad meditation the whole day long, and no joy came to his heart.

"How could paternal joys bloom for one," said he to himself, "who has destroyed the hope and joy of his father and his mother? How could a good and joyous thing grow from evil seed?"

When evening came, a deep sleep fell upon Cain; and

he saw a vision, and beheld the line of his future descendants.

First, his great-grandson, Lamech, appeared; his gestures were menacing, in his hand he wielded a two-edged sword; and his wives Adah and Zilla shrank trembling at the brightness of the weapon. But Lamech went out and found a man, to whom he said: "Thou didst wound me once;" and he slew him. Then the son of the slain man came and fell down before Lamech, entreating him. But Lamech said: "Thou hast bruised me;" and he killed him, too. Now there arose a weeping and wailing among the wives and children of the slain. Then Lamech stretched out his bloody sword, and cried with an angry voice: "Cain's revenge was sevenfold; but Lamech shall be revenged seven times sevenfold."

A shuddering fear fell upon the dreamer. But he looked on; and behold, Tubal Cain, Lamech's son, appeared to him, digging out of the earth all kinds of ore, gold, and silver, and iron; and he melted it, and worked it artificially into different kinds of beautiful vessels. By his side and around his feet, stood all manner of costly vessels, golden crowns and silver sceptres, and the iron of the ploughshare dug up the ground.

Then Cain triumphed in his dream, saying: "Oh, joy, that at length I behold a cheering sight! Blessed art thou, Tubal Cain, my beloved!"

Now Jubal appeared, the brother of Tubal Cain, and Cain saw how Jubal cut down a tree with the axe of his brother.

"Alas," sighed Cain, "he will make a weapon, and will repeat my own crime, to my horror!"

But Jubal began to carve the wood, and to ponder; and behold, he made a harp and a shepherd's pipe out of the tree. And when Cain heard the sweet sounds which came from the wood and the strings, he was refreshed, and exclaimed: "Blessed art thou above all others, Jubal, my descendant! How canst thou breathe into the dumb wood the breath of joy, and teach dead trees to sing? Blessed art thou, Tubal, for thou hast redeemed Cain's sin, and brought peace and joy to mankind. Peace be with you, ye sons of Lamech! The earth is subject to your plough, the forest to your axe, and the wild beasts fly before your sword. How lovely are the dwellings of men, adorned with gold and silver, and precious metal! What could be wanting to their happiness? Be praised, ye sons of Lamech!"

Thus Cain spoke in his dream; and the sweet sounds of the harp, and a clang of horns from afar off, seemed to reach his ear, so that he slept more soundly than before.

Then Cain dreamed again; and there appeared two brothers, chiefs of the people,—youths both of high stature like Adam, and of noble countenance like Abel.

Thus they stood like two cedars, looking with beaming eyes at one of the golden crowns of Tubal Cain and the silver sceptre. A multitude was ranged on either side; but the youths towered above them all, and the voices of the singers sounded amid the harps and flutes.

"Glorious progress of human culture!" exclaimed the

dreaming progenitor. "They receive the useful and the beautiful ; they will unitedly produce the noble."

Now both the youths stepped forward, and together they stretched forth each his right hand to the golden crown and sceptre. Then the multitude of the people separated into two armies, as a thunder-cloud parting on the ridge of a mountain, and rolling around the highest peaks. Each host pointed to one of the youths, and cried: "To the worthiest!"

The two brothers parted, and each hastened, with flaming eyes, to place himself at the head of his host. A terrible tumult ensued, and a rushing, as when the tempest tosses the sea, and the surging billows dash against the rocks.

And Cain looked, and behold, the ploughshares were turned into swords—blooming trees into spears ; the fields were trodden down, the huts consumed by the flames. Gnashing their teeth and foaming with fury, the two armies met. Brother fought against brother, the fields smoked with blood, and the verdant earth was covered with the bodies of the slain. And the shouts of the combatants, and the groans of the dying, arose and mingled with the sounds of the pipes and of the brazen trumpets.

Now the two youths met and began to fight ; blood and sweat ran from their brows. At length the sword of the younger brother pierced the breast of the elder. He fell to the ground, and the victor set his foot on the blood-stained corpse.

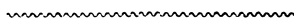
Now the golden crown was presented to the victor ;



shouts of triumph and war-songs resounded to the harps and pipes ; while pillars of fire rose in the distance. The young prince was placed on a chariot decked with flowers, and led away in triumph over the dead bodies.

The tumult ceased ; — and now the mothers of the slain appeared, and their wives, their children, and their betrothed, wandering about among the corpses, some tearing their hair with wild and bitter cries and wailings, others hovering around like spectres.

“Just God, it is enough !” cried Cain, and awoke from his dream with the sweat of agony trickling from his brow. “O thou eternal Judge !” exclaimed he ; “why do I live to see the fruit of my sowing ? Alas, a dream like this is worse than the terrors of a tenfold death. Must even the gift of prophecy be turned into a curse to the sinner ?”



#### CEPHAS.

IN the morning, when day began to dawn, and all men were still sleeping, Cephas, the apostle of the Lord, wandered with his beloved disciple, John Mark, through a little village in Galilee. The inhabitants of the village were still sunk in deep slumber, not a footstep was heard, nor the voice of a man. Suddenly a cock announced the advent of the morning.

Then Cephas said : “Dost thou hear the call of my herald, Mark ?”

Mark answered with a voice of modest respect: "Why dost thou call him thine? Does he not announce the coming morn to us all?"

"Yea," answered Cephas; "but dost thou not remember that night, when he called to me with a loud voice, as they led the Lord to death? I never hear the call but I think upon that day and that hour."

"Oh, my friend and teacher!" cried Mark, with mournful fervour, and could speak no more.

Then Cephas said: "Why sighest thou, Mark? Behold, not Simon the faint-hearted, who would not know him, walketh with thee, but Cephas the rock. The darkness of night then compassed me round about; but the night is gone, and day hath broken. The cry of the herald announceth to us the sun of truth, in whose rays we walk, and the victorious fight, to which we are drawing nigh. Behold, I stood and wept, then it was night and darkness; but now we walk as in day—strong and cheerfully."

"Thus it becometh the modest messenger of God, proclaiming the heavenly tidings," answered Mark; and they went their way joyfully, leaning upon their staffs.

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## THE YOUNG TREE.

A BOY saw his father planting a wild apple-tree.

"What are you going to do with that misshapen thing?" asked the boy. "I am sure, I would not allow it room in the garden."



But the father answered: "Do not judge rashly, my boy. Do you know this tree, which you call a misshapen thing?"

"Know it!" said the boy. "One may well see what it is!"

"Its outward form you see," said the father, "but not what is hidden therein. This unsightly little tree may become a high and beautiful one. It may bear flowers and fruit in a few years, to gladden and refresh us. As yet it is not able to do so, for the power is still hidden and weak by which this result will one day be produced."

After some time, William saw his father again at the tree. He had put a stake into the ground, and was tying the tree to it.

"Why are you doing that?" asked the boy. "You take away the tree's liberty."

The father answered: "I do so, that the wind may not break it, or throw it to the ground, and that it may grow up slender and straight."

Then the father cut several twigs from the tree, loosened the ground all round, and surrounded it with thorns to keep off the cattle.

"See," said the father, "I love the little tree for the power that lies hidden within it. Therefore I take care that this hidden power may grow and prosper."

In the beginning of the next spring, the father took the boy again to the tree. He had cut a graft from another fruit-tree. Now he took his knife, and with one cut separated the crown from the little tree. "Oh, what a pity!" exclaimed the boy. "Now all the trouble is lost."



But the father smiled, and grafted the twig on the stump of the tree, binding it up carefully. Then he said: "Behold, if the tree had remained in the forest, it would have grown up at hazard, crooked and rugged, and would never have brought forth edible fruit. But I have guided its growth and its intrinsic virtue. Before spring appears in his full vigour, I have given the nobler graft to the tree, that it may direct its growing strength thereon, and bear in future lovely flowers and fruit."

Soon the tree spread forth twigs and branches, and was pleasant to look upon. For it had buds and flowers, and in autumn the twigs were bent by the abundance of golden and ruddy apples.

"What do you think now?" asked the boy's father.

"Oh!" answered he joyfully, "it is a dear and grateful little tree!"

"Behold," continued the father, "how it extends its laden branches towards you! Well, I give it to you, William. From henceforth it shall belong to you, for it has now reached its destiny."



## THE VIOLET.

LITTLE Maria was walking one morning with her father and mother in the fields, and said: "Why do people love the violet so dearly? They sing its praises in many beautiful songs; and as soon as it blooms every one looks for it, and is glad when he finds one." Thus said Maria to her mother.

"My child," answered the mother, "it is the first gift of spring after the cold winter. We enjoy the good and the beautiful most after having missed it for a long time."

"And we receive it with more thankfulness," said the father, "because spring gives the flower so early and so quickly. Whoever does good quickly proves that he does it willingly, and increases the gratitude of the receiver; and gratitude sanctifies joy."

"Is not the violet called the flower of modesty?" asked Maria.

"It deserves that name," answered her mother, "for it grows in concealment, a lowly plant; yet it blooms as prettily, and sheds as sweet a fragrance, as any other flower. And therefore it is esteemed and looked for no less; and every one rejoices at finding it."

"How nice it is," cried Maria, "that Nature gives this pretty modest flower so early!"

"She would thereby teach children," answered her mother, smiling, "that the good and the beautiful must bloom in them at an early age, that it may some day bring forth good fruit."

"And," said the father, "by offering his first beautiful gift so modestly, spring makes us expect that he has yet many fair and noble gifts to dispense; for only where modesty and humility prevail, the good and the great can prosper."

Now Maria found by the wayside, under the briers, a full-blown violet; but a heavy dewdrop sparkled in the blue calyx of the flower, bending it to the ground with its weight.

The little maiden stood looking at the flower, and said: "The heavy dewdrop will spoil the violet, and bend it quite to the dust."



"Oh no, Maria," answered the mother; "the bright drop glistens like a pearl in the beautiful flower. Soon the sun will warm and dissolve the drop, and then the violet will rise, more beautiful and fragrant than before; for the dew of heaven nourishes and refreshes the flower."

"It grows beneath the briers," said the father; "but they do it no harm: they protect the delicate violet from the cold blast of night, and the stormy winds; for it is a darling of heavenly love."

Then Maria looked at the flower, and said: "Then I will not pick the violet before it has been refreshed and strengthened by the dewdrop."

"How easily childlike simplicity can see and appreciate the heavenly in the beauties of earth!" said the mother to the father.

"Because simplicity itself is not far from heaven!" answered the father.



## THE PILGRIMS.

"Show me the ways of my human brethren on earth," said the spirit of a boy named Adoniah, who, taken from earth at an early period, wandered through the heavenly regions, under the guidance of his guardian angel.

The angel smiled, and brought the boy to an eminence. In the depth below was a dark valley, full of steep paths and precipices. "Behold," said he, "a picture of earth; seest thou the wanderers?"

"Whither are all these people going?" asked Adoniah. "They seem to be walking zealously."

"They all press forward towards the goal," answered the angel. "They see it glimmer faintly at a distance. There they hope to find what they lack,—peace of mind and fulfilment of desire. But the way is rugged and steep; nor is the right one the most pleasant to wander, or the easiest to find."

"Love overcomes all things," said Adoniah. "It will also make the path smooth for them, that they miss not their goal."

"Behold!" said the angel; and Adoniah looked on.

One of the wanderers went aside into another path, and said, "This way appears to be the better!" and some followed him. Then a host of the others fell upon them, and mocked them with angry words and with bitterness.

"Why are they doing this?" asked Adoniah, full of wonder.

The angel said: "Because those leave the beaten way, and choose another path."

"Strange!" said the boy; "but they all press towards *one* home. If these err, why have not the others compassion on them? And how can they know, before they reach the goal, which is the right way?"

The angel replied: "The great host are they who follow the wrong path; for pride and arrogance walk hand in hand with deceit. Let them go, and observe the others."

Adoniah perceived some lying fainting by the way.

"Oh!" exclaimed he, "that one would come to refresh them!"

There came some laden with fruit and costly viands.

"Oh!" cried the boy; "this is well. They will refresh the faint and weary, and both will continue their journey with renewed cheerfulness."

Adoniah looked on, full of expectation; but, behold, they who carried the fruits passed on, and heeded not the weary travellers.

"How is this possible?" exclaimed the boy; are they not brethren? What hardness of heart!"

"They are *men*!" answered the angel. "Behold!"

Adoniah looked again. One of the pilgrims stumbled over a stone, because he did not walk heedfully, and fell by the side of a precipice.

"Alas!" cried the boy, "would that one might come to reach his hand, and help him to rise!"

There came one, who laughed scornfully at the fallen man; another smote him with his foot, so that he fell yet nearer to the verge of the precipice; a third threw him, with scorn, into the chasm below.

Adoniah shuddered, and cried, "Is this the world?"

The angel opened his eyes, that he might see some who had reached the height. They wandered steadily on, bending their looks eagerly forwards. The lustre of the goal they were approaching so near shone upon their faces.

Adoniah beheld it, embraced his celestial guide, and said, "Happy am I that have accomplished my journey so early!"

## THE LIME-TREES.

A VENERABLE old countryman of seventy-five years sat one summer's day with his children and grandchildren under the shade of two lime-trees, which he had planted on his wedding-day before the door of his house. The trees were high, and thickly covered with foliage; sweetly and coolly their united shade fell on the cheerful family group; and when at intervals a gentle breeze moved the branches and leaves, the sun-light flowed in bright spots over the stone table, glancing to and fro on the cheerful circle, and on the bronzed cheeks and silvery hair of the excellent old man.

Then he looked around, and said: "My children, these trees are dearer to me than any others which my hands have ever planted. True it is, I look up with reverence to the ancient oak, the queen of the forest, and I receive with thankfulness the fruit of the apple and the pear-tree, and of the cheering vine. But these two trees I love above all others."

"Because you planted them on a joyful day," said the youngest son, who was betrothed; and he looked with a smile at his bride.

"Yes, children," said the old man, with a look of satisfaction at his aged wife, who sat next to him, "it heightens their value in my eyes; they recall to me fifty pleasant years."

"But, father, what an abundance of apples or pears might we have gathered in fifty years, if they had been fruit-trees!" said a daughter of the old man, the active manager of his household, half in jest, half in earnest.

"You speak in jest, my thrifty daughter," answered her father; "for you know as well as I that a man lives not alone by what enters into the mouth. He lacketh a higher and more edifying life: and for this he needs signs, and images, and temples.

"Look you, my children, these lime-trees are the sign of domestic union. Do they not stand like two priests before our home? Who," continued the old man, "would ask for gain or use? The soft wood of my favourite tree is, indeed, not fit even to be burned, much less to build houses or palaces. But it affords more; for the tree is in itself a gladsome retreat, a shelter and a screen against the heat of the summer's day." Here the old man looked round him, and all gazed with pleasure upon the glancing light and the changing shadow.

"It softens the glowing stream of the light of heaven," continued the old man, "by dividing it into rounded rays. In its cool twilight we feel how sweet the light is. It is as though we would touch it with our hands. Therefore these trees appear to me like priests and mediators between the dark earth and the purest gift which descends on us from above.

"Thus the calm domestic life brings us nearer to the source of eternal light. We learn what the word 'father' means, and call Him who fills heaven and earth by the filial name."



As he spoke thus, the old man lifted up his head; he raised his eyes to the lime-trees, and a stream of light falling at that moment on his countenance, surrounded him, as it were, with a halo.

“And when a blessed rain,” continued he, “descends to refresh the thirsty land, then, after the first enjoyment, and when the dewy clouds have passed over, it drops yet for a long time from the leaves of my tree. It is as if it would show to us in each falling drop the mildness and benevolence of heaven.

“Like unto this is domestic life. In its bosom lasting joy has her dwelling-place. It distributes its gifts, converts mute rapture into cheerful gratitude, and changes the impetuosity of youthful feelings into lasting quiet gladness.

“And even if a thunder-cloud rises, we may safely look on the terrible course of the tempest under the screen of the peaceful tree. It draws not down the lightning like the proud oak, but protects the house from the fury of the storm.

“In its foliage cheerful light is gathered together, as in a sanctuary of innocence and love. The dove takes refuge with her mate, and the domestic swallow resorts there with her young ones in the heat of noon; here the social hedge-sparrow and the gay goldfinch build their yearly nests; here the nightingale warbles her matchless song at dawn of day and in the silent night; and at its root the faithful house-dog and the poultry of the yard lie down.

“The weary pilgrim loves to repose under its shade, and many a poor man hath here found refreshment.

“Ah, my dear children, quiet domestic life harbours

much that is good and beautiful. It is the home of kindness, of hospitality, and benevolence.

“What sweet fragrance is diffused by the modest blossom of the tree! And see, the gay-winged children of summer fluttering around the top; hark, too, what a hum amid the branches! On each flower a bee is busy, extracting honey and wax for her cells.

“Thus in the peaceful bosom of domestic life flourish cheerful industry and quiet serene enjoyment, unembittered by remorse.

“Under these trees,” said the eldest son, “we passed the pleasant days of childhood; here was the play-ground of our youth. All our names are cut in the bark of the trees.”

“Yes, children,” said the old man, “under this shadow you grew up to higher and more earnest life. The days of childhood need the gentle shadow and the softened light for their development. Here your bodies grew in strength and agility, while your souls were preserved in pure and childlike simplicity. Without care you walked here before the eyes of your parents; your names are cut in the bark of the trees, and to them were added the names of your loves, and the names of my grandchildren to my children.

“The spirit of love and the heavenly quiet feelings of faith and hope can prosper only in the peaceful calm of domestic life.”

The old man looked up to heaven, and paused. After a while he began again; “How fairly they stand in the fulness of their blooming, the priestly trees, sending down shade upon us! Yet a little while, and autumn will come,

and the hour of fading. But even their fading is beautiful. First the flower falls fluttering to the ground; then the leaf withers into divers colours, till it is gently loosened from the twig, and floats downwards. We heap up the dry leaves round the stem of the tree, to nourish and to protect the root from the keen frost of winter, and think gratefully of the shadow and the pleasure which it afforded us in its bloom."

When the old man said this, the children looked sadly at him and their mother, and in many an eye stood a sparkling tear.

Then the father turned his smiling countenance to the surrounding group, and said: "Children, must it not be so? Thus is the decree of kind Nature. She strips the tree when we no longer need its shade, to afford free access to light and the sunbeams. It lays by its foliage to assume it in greater beauty, and to grow higher when spring comes again. Both fade at the same time, and their foliage falls together, as in union it formed a shadow.

"Is it not so, thou dear, faithful partner of my life, neither stays behind? Calm and sweet is the repose in a well-prepared habitation."

Thus said the old man, and cheerfully extended his hand to his wife. She took it with a kind and loving smile.

The children concealed their tears; and the games and joyful clamour of the grandchildren resounded loudly under the shadow of the friendly lime-trees.



## THE VESTURE OF EARTH.

THE third morning of creation had risen. Jehovah said to the heavenly host: "Give earth a vesture to adorn her, and to give joy to the inhabitants thereof!"

Then the angels ascended and descended to the newly created world.

First came Eloah, the resplendent watcher at the throne of heaven. As his foot touched the ground, a diamond-rock sprang forth, radiant like the gates of heaven. A stream of radiance issued from the rock to the sky, like the floating splendour of the northern light. "This be the vesture of earth!" said Eloah.

But the tutelary angel of the earth implored: "Not so, Eloah! Not heavenly beings, like thee, will inhabit the world, but weak creatures formed out of dust. How could their dim eyes bear the pure lustre of heaven? They would be blinded by the glorious brightness! They are to walk in *faith*."

Now Shamma, the gentle and profound guard of the firmament, descended, and touched the ground with his rod. A sapphire, blue like the vault of heaven, arose like an island from the barren ground.

The guardian angel looked on it, and said: "Lovely are the mild rays of thy stone. But the form of the ground whereon the son of dust shall walk must not be like that of heaven, that it may not appear of little import to man,

whether he lifts up his countenance, or bends it down: earth must not appear to him like heaven."

Then Uriel, the angel of the morning-light, descended, and under his feet arose a red ruby.

"How sweetly the dawn smiles from thy work!" said the angel of the earth; "but the vesture of the new creation must not resemble it. The dwellers on earth might look up coldly and unfeelingly to the source of light, and forget the higher beauty in the deceptive dust. Therefore let it be more rarely seen."

Now the angel of midnight and tempest appeared, on mighty rushing wings, in black garb. His dark shadow fell on the brightness of the resplendent jewels.

The heavenly messengers beheld with wonder the strange floating rays of light and darkness. They gave a sign; the waves of light and shadow commingled, and were condensed into an emerald.

The angels smiled; the genius of the earth exulted, and said: "Thus be the vesture of earth, of mingled light and shade, like the beings which shall dwell therein. It will be an ornament to her, and sweet for their eyes to look upon."

Thus he spake; but the messengers of heaven said: "Let the heavenly light dwell in the depths and in the heights!"

They soared upwards, and when their feet left the gleaming rocks, they broke into a thousand fragments, and sunk down deep into the subterranean caves.

The tutelary angel of the earth clothed the newly-created



hills and valleys in their pleasant green garment, and grass and herbs grew, and trees, each after their kind.

And Jehovah saw that it was good, and spake: "That man may remember the love and care of the celestial beings, let the colours of Eloah, Shamma, and Uriel bloom from out the lovely green, but in perishable form!"

And it was so.



## PAUL AND LUKE.

PAUL, the messenger of the Lord to the Gentiles, walked with his disciple Luke in Athens, the chief city of Greece; and Paul was grave and sad, for his soul was troubled to see the multitude of idols and temples among the wise and skilful people, and so many signs of superstition. He held his peace, and was vexed; and Luke, knowing the Apostle's thoughts, walked in silence by his side. Then they came to another altar, and the Apostle's countenance became serene and cheerful.

Now Luke marvelled, and said: "Why is thy heart glad at this altar of an idol?"

Then the Apostle said to his disciple: "Read the superscription." And Luke read the words: "To the unknown God."

Then Paul answered and said: "Behold, Luke, the truth

is not quite lost, even amid error and darkness. It is secretly hidden and sleepeth, waiting for the summons and the ray of light which shall awaken it."

Then they went to the market-place, and Paul spake to the Athenians of the unknown God; and many believed, but others said: "We will hear thee again in this matter."



## THE WAY.

ABRAHAM, the father of them that believe, dwelt in the land of Haran, whither he had gone with his father Terah, and his cattle, and all that was his. When Terah, his father, died at a good old age, Abraham buried him, and mourned for him, and prepared himself to take possession of his heritage in the fruitful land of Haran. Then the word of the Lord came to Abraham, saying: "Get thee out of this country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and go into a land which I will show thee."

And Abraham did as the Lord commanded him, and was obedient, and went out, not knowing whither he went.

When he had journeyed some days from Haran, he met on his way travellers from Haran his country, merchants,



who were returning from the land of Egypt and Arabia, with camels and much costly merchandise.

They asked Abraham, saying: "Whither goest thou?"

Abraham answered and said: "To a distant land."

Then they asked again: "What is the name of the land, and which is the way that leads thither?"

Abraham answered and said: "I know not the name of the land, neither the way which leads to it."

Then the merchants laughed, and derided Abraham, and said: "Who will guide thee and show thee the way through the wilderness, that thou mayst not perish with all that is thine?"

And Abraham answered and said: "He who commanded me to go forth will guide me in safety."

Then the merchants went their way, deriding him; but Abraham continued his journey, and reached the land of promise.





## THE PRAYER.

CORNELIA was the delight and the pride of her parents. She was fair to look upon as a ray of light, and her cheeks bloomed like the young rose opening for the first time to the dew of heaven. Her soul was as innocent and pure as a morning in spring, which dawns on the blooming valleys, announcing the cheerful day. Cornelia had not yet experienced the cares and troubles of life; the days of her youth were serene and cheerful. But, behold, her mother was taken ill, and was confined to her bed for many days

with a violent fever, which deprived her of the use of her reason. Then the young girl spent the long nights watching by the bed of her mother, nursing her with tender care and secret anxiety.

On the seventh day the fever was more violent than ever; an anxious silence prevailed in the mother's chamber, only interrupted by suppressed sobs, for every one believed death approaching.

But in the evening the mother fell asleep, and this longed-for refreshment revived her sinking strength and restored her to life. Cornelia was sitting by her bed, listening to her breath, and trembling with fear and hope. When the day dawned, her mother opened her eyes and said: "I feel better; I shall recover!" And she took a little refreshment, and went to sleep again.

Cornelia's heart was deeply touched. Gently she left the chamber, went out into the fields, and ascended a hill at the time of sunrise. Here she stood, moved by contending sensations of pain and hope. Then the sun rose and darted his golden beams on her countenance; and when she remembered her mother's returning health after the refreshing slumber, and the anxiety she had felt, she could no more contain the emotion of her heart; she knelt on the flowers of the hill, and her tears mingled with the dew of heaven.

Then she lifted up her countenance and returned home to her mother's chamber. And Cornelia was more beautiful and lovely than before; for she had spoken to God.



## THE INVISIBLE PRINCE.

IN a distant country in the East there lived a little tribe in idolatry and superstition. It came to pass that they quarrelled regarding the succession, and agreed, at last, to choose a stranger to govern them. They met a man of the house of Israel, of the name of Abiah, and chose him for their king. It was about the time that Shalmaneser had destroyed the house of Israel, and scattered the Israelites throughout the world.

Abiah, who was a pious man, was greatly grieved that he should reign over an idolatrous nation; and when they refused to leave their idols he was very wroth. But the Spirit of the Lord spake to him: "Thinkest thou I cannot destroy their idols? and yet I suffer the sun to shine upon them. Go, and do thou likewise."

Then Abiah suffered them, and reigned wisely; for he thought: "Perhaps my son may be successful." When the hour came that he should die, he said to the people: "Behold, I shall die, and my son will be your king. You have not yet seen his face; but ye shall know his government by the fruits thereof. Follow him, he will lead you wisely."

The people promised to do so; and when Abiah was dead, they obeyed the unknown sovereign, and prospered greatly; for his doings were like those of a father, and the commands that issued from his gates were full of wisdom,

justice, and kindness. Like the beams of the sun, the favour of the unknown monarch was spread abroad over all the inhabitants of the land; and wherever there was want, the king's help was sure to come. Then they all marvelled, and said: "We see him not; how can he see us?" For he lived concealed in his house, and no man had beheld his face.

The people longed, therefore, the more to see and to bless him, and they said: "We have our gods before our eyes, and can see and handle them; why may we not see the face of the king, who is more to us than a father?"

Others made images of him according to their own imaginings; and each man said of his own: "Behold, this is he! he must be like unto this!"

At last their desire became very great, and the people assembled before the gates of the palace, and implored with one voice: "Oh, let our lord the king suffer us to behold his face!"

Thereupon the high gates were opened, and the king came forth, clothed in simple raiment, and said: "Behold, I am your king!"

Then the people blessed him, and shouted for joy; but when they looked fixedly at him, they were astonished, and cried: "We know thy face." For he had often walked among them, but they had not known him, thinking him to be a servant or a stranger.

Then the king beckoned with his hand; and when silence prevailed, he lifted up his voice and said: "Now you see that I am a man like you. Think ye that these hands and feet, these eyes and lips, which are mortal and perish-

able, have reigned over you? Not so. That which has guided, blessed, and gladdened you through me ye cannot see, neither can I see it. Can you see wisdom, and kindness, and justice? They were near to you when I walked unrecognised among you. Now you see me, but you do not see them. Now judge ye what is in my earthly form. Can the visible create the invisible? And that which is in me also is not mine, but his who made me your king."

Thus said the excellent prince; and the people returned to their homes, blessing and thanking him. And they broke in pieces the pictures and images which they had made of him. Soon after, they also broke their idols, and believed in Him who is invisible.



## THE DREAM OF SOCRATES.

THE day when Socrates was to drink the poisoned cup had come. Early in the morning his beloved disciples assembled around him; with chastened sorrow they stood about the couch of the philosopher; some of them were weeping.

Then the wise martyr lifted up his head, and said: "Why this mournful silence, my beloved? I will tell you of a cheerful thing, a dream which I dreamed last night."

"Couldst thou sleep, and even dream of joyous things?" said the good Apollodorus. "I could not close my eyes."

Then Socrates smiled, and said: "What would my past

life be worth, if it could not even sweeten my last sleep? Dost thou not think, Apollodorus, that I have devoted it to celestial love?"

Several voices, tremulous with grateful emotion, answered this question. Apollodorus could reply only by silence, and fast-flowing tears.

"Behold," said Socrates, "to him who devotes his life to her service, she sends down the lovely Graces. Secretly and invisibly they beautify his hours, be they hours of joy or hours of suffering, with heavenly lustre, and surround them with ambrosial fragrance.

"But, above all, the sweet sisters are busy about him in the last hour of his life; for this is the most serious of all, and hath greatest need of the heavenly light. Thus the last hour of the day is the most beautiful; the beams of evening brighten it like a stream of glory from Elysium."

"But then the dark night follows," interrupted the calm Xenophon.

"For our hemisphere," replied Socrates. "Is not our sunset the dawn of morning for another half of the globe?"

Socrates continued: "Now listen, my beloved. For as the land of shadows—as the living call it—will soon be to me a land of light—as the spirits of the dead will call it,—and as I am nearer to this land than any of you, my words may convey to you something that is new. Listen to me.

"The Graces themselves leave their favourite in his last hour; for they float on before him, to prepare for him the heavenly life, after they have adorned his earthly career.

But they leave him not without comfort. They send to the dying one three other genii, adorned with celestial beauty.

“And these three are *Sleep*, the twin-brother and at the same time the lovely image of death; the *Dream*, the picture of a past life, but at the same time the messenger of another world,—he hovers in the midst; between them, and with them, walks *Death*, more glorious and beautiful than either, clad with the lustre of heavenly dawn.

“Behold, Apollodorus, the first two did not fail me this night, and the latter appeared to me afar off. Why should I fear his approach? I expect him with ardent desire.”

The eyes of the disciples filled with tears, and a mournful silence prevailed in the prison.

After a while Socrates continued: “I had almost forgotten my dream. Sleep had abundantly showered his seeds of slumber on me, and indeed I wanted strength for the work I am to conclude with serenity this day. But not bodily refreshment alone was granted to me in the balmy embrace of sleep; the lovely god of dreams too brightened the eyes of my soul. I saw a beautiful youth entering my prison. On his countenance were visible that serene gravity and calm composure which justly befit a divine form. In his right hand he held a burning torch, that spread a rosy lustre, like evening light, over the darkness of my prison. The more cheering and sweet this brightness and the aspect of the youth were to me, the more miserable and dreary the night of my prison appeared.

“Slowly the divine youth lowered the torch. But



methought I seized his arm, and cried: 'What wouldst thou do?'

"He answered: 'I extinguish the torch.'

"'Oh, no,' implored I; 'it spreads a sweet light through the darkness of my prison.' But he smiled, and said: 'It is the torch of terrestrial life. Thou needest it no longer; for so soon as it is extinguished, thy bodily eye will close for ever, and thou wilt rise hand in hand with me to a higher world, where a pure eternal lustre will surround thee. How couldst thou yet lack the self-consuming earthly torch?'

"'Oh, then turn the torch,' cried I, and awoke. I was alone in the night of my dungeon. Alas, I grieved that all had been a dream. But, behold, here comes the cup which will realise it."

The jailor entered with the boy who carried the cup of poison. The voice of weeping and lamentation arose among the disciples of Socrates, and even the jailor wept.



## ADAM AND THE SERAPH.

ONE evening Adam reposed on a hill, under a tree, in the garden of Eden, and his countenance was raised towards the firmament. Then a seraph came to him, and said: "Why are thy longing eyes fixed so intently on the vault of heaven? What dost thou desire, Adam?"

"What could I desire here, in these habitations of peace?" answered the father of the human race. "But my eye



looks up to the stars, which are glittering on high. Then I wish for the wings of an eagle, to rise up to them, and to behold close to me the beaming forms."

"Thou hast these wings," answered the seraph, and touched Adam; then a deep sleep fell upon him, and he dreamed, and it seemed to him that he flew up to heaven.

When he awoke, he looked round, and wondered to find himself lying under the tree on the hill. The seraph stood before him, and said: "Whereon dost thou ponder, Adam?"

Adam answered and said: "Behold, I flew up to the vault of the sky, and hovered among the stars, flying about Orion, and Arcturus, and the Pleiads; radiant worlds, great and glorious, like the sun, rushed past me; the white track which thou seest yonder on high is an ocean of light, full of gleaming worlds, and over that sea of glory is another and yet another. And on those radiant worlds are beings like myself, calling upon the Lord, and praising his name. Seraph, didst thou guide me yonder?"

"This tree," answered the seraph, "has overshadowed thee, and thy body has rested on this hill. But, behold, Adam, within thee dwells a seraph, who is able to rise to those glorious worlds, and who, the higher he soareth, bendeth the knee in deeper humility before Jehovah. Son of earth, prize and guard this seraph, that worldly lusts paralyse not his flight, to chain him to the earth."

The seraph spake thus, and disappeared.



## THE IMBECILE CHILD.

ABRAHAM sat one day in the grove of Mamre, leaning his head on his hand, and sorrowing. Then his son Isaac came to him, and said: "My father, why mournest thou? what aileth thee?"

Abraham answered and said: "My soul mourneth for the people of Canaan, that they know not the Lord, but walk in their own ways, in darkness and foolishness."

"Oh, my father," answered the son, "is it only this?"

Let not thy heart be sorrowful; for are not these their own ways?"

Then the patriarch rose up from his seat, and said: "Come, and follow me." And he led the youth to a hut, and said to him: "Behold!"

There was a child that was imbecile, and the mother sat weeping by it. Abraham asked her: "Why weepest thou?"

Then the mother said: "Alas, this my son eateth and drinketh, and we minister unto him; but he knows not the face of his father nor of his mother. Thus his life is lost, and the source of joy is sealed to him."

Thus said the mother, weeping; and Abraham went and preached the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.



## THE CREATION OF THE CATERPILLAR.

WHEN the parents of the human race had been banished from Eden for their transgression, and the gentle Abel had already yielded up his life under the heavy hand of his brother, the angel of death came to Jehovah, and said: "The fiat of death is gone forth over the earth, and man doth show himself worthy of his fate. Grant me then to create some beings for ministers of destruction, and to change others, that they may assist me in my work."

Jehovah gave consent. Then the angel of the Lord

descended, and gave to the lion the terrible claws and the blood-thirsty jaw; his roaring shook the field for the first time; and instead of the curly hair, which once adorned his neck, the yellow mane rolled over his shoulders. The tiger and leopard, which till then had sported among the lambs, received the spotted skin, and with it the raging thirst for blood. Vultures and eagles screamed in the air, bringing death and destruction to the valleys with their pointed claws. In the crevices of the rock lurked the venom-swelled viper.

The guardian angel of the earth mourned, for there was dissension in nature. Even the angel of death shrunk back before the creatures of his hand. But he consoled himself, saying: "Doth not man form his world for himself? He refused calmness and peace, and chose strife rather than dominion. How can I be otherwise than terrible on the desecrated earth?"

Thus he said, and appointed the desert for a dwelling-place to the terrible monsters, and the hours of night for their time of prey. For with the celestial beings, even severe justice is never without love.

Then the angel of destruction flew to the habitations of the first family of men, and descended into a little garden, where Mirza, the beloved and mourning sister of Abel, grew flowers and trees. It was a little picture of Eden, full of cool shade and pleasant fragrance and blossoms.

Thoughtfully the heavenly messenger stood here, touched by the innocence and love of Mirza. "Must I cause new grief to the gentle sufferer?" said he. "Be it so! Ever from grief joy bloometh for the pious heart. And does

not she also belong to the fallen race? The seed of sin is everlasting. Here also mortality must have its minister."

He lowered his rod, and from the dust which he touched issued a voracious caterpillar. The insect began immediately to eat the plants round about, and to gnaw the flowers and leaves of the nearest tree.

Soon afterwards, Mirza came into her garden, and was terrified on discovering the destruction made among the plants and flowers. But when she approached, and perceived the strange creature gnawing at the branches, Mirza was still more affrighted, and ran to her brother Seth. "Behold," said she, "a serpent eateth my trees, crawling on the branches."

Then Seth came into the garden, and after having beheld the caterpillar, he said: "Not so, Mirza. Fear has made the animal more terrible in thine eyes than it really is. The serpent crawls on its belly; but this creature has feet, and is of another kind, living on leaves like a sheep. I will crush it with my foot."

Then the boy shook the tree, and the caterpillar fell to the ground.

"Ah, no!" implored Mirza, "kill it not. Do we not also eat of the fruit of the tree? The creature knows not that this is my garden, and my delight. Therefore slay it not. I will give it enough to eat, that it may damage my plants no more."

Then the boy said: "Are not all creatures subject to us, and have we not dominion over them?"

"But it is better," said Mirza, "to practise mercy and loving-kindness than violence. Let it live!"

Now Mirza made an enclosure round the caterpillar, and gave it at morning and night more flowers and leaves than it could eat.

When the heavenly messenger saw this, he was moved, and said: "Man has not altogether lost the image of his Maker. He is able to bestow charity even on an enemy, and to render good for evil."

The angel stood thoughtfully; then he said: "It is meet that the good should receive the beautiful." He touched the gnawing worm with his rod, and lo, the caterpillar was endowed with the miraculous power of building its own sepulchre. All this was done about the time of twilight.

The next morning, at sunrise, Mirza came into the garden, and looked in the enclosure for the caterpillar; but she found it not. "Oh, it is still asleep," said she, in childish wise. "I will not awaken it, but collect leaves while the dew is yet on them."

Then she went to gather flowers and leaves, for Mirza had grown to love the creature by doing it good; and all nature was dear to her heart since Abel walked with her no more.

When Mirza came with the blossoms and leaves to feed the caterpillar, she found the chrysalis bright and fair as a silvery cloud. She stood amazed; then she called her father and mother, and all the inmates of the house, and said: "Behold, what a creature I have bred! Now it is dead, lying in a wonderful tomb. Who knows whether it may not come forth to life again?"

Thus said Mirza, with prophetic spirit. But she knew not that she had the gift of prophecy.

Adam, her father, said: "Who may expound this? The beginning and the end is hidden from the eyes of men. But the new event may not be without instruction and wisdom. Come, let us take it into our hut."

Now they carried the chrysalis into their habitation, and Mirza said: "I am glad that I have tended it even unto its death."

Thus the coil of the unknown creature lay in the habitation of men, and was to them an emblem of Abel, the first who died on earth. When they were assembled one morning, speaking with mournful hearts of death, behold, suddenly a gentle rustling was heard, and the chrysalis moved of its own accord. Now they all approached, and looked on the shrouded insect in silent expectation.

Suddenly the round silvery grave burst, and, lo, a living creature came forth out of the narrow shell, trembling and unfolding a double pair of wings. The wings were blue like a sapphire and the vault of heaven when the sky is clear, surrounded with a golden edge. On the broken shroud rested a red drop like blood. The new-born creature fluttered with quivering wings over the balmy and blooming trees.

Holy joy and admiration filled the hearts of the first mortals, and they remembered Abel, the first of the dead. And their eyes were opened, and they saw the form of Abel like unto an angel.

And they heard the voice of the angel of death, who said: "Behold, life cometh forth from death, and days are converted into eternity. It is given to the pure mind and unto child-like faith to see truth in an emblem."

From that day Mirza mourned no more for Abel, and the first of the human race thought henceforth of death with joyful hope.



### THE BEAUTIFUL.

EARLY one morning in May, a father took his son Theodore into a rich man's garden, where Theodore had never been before. The garden was far from the town, and beautifully adorned with all kinds of shrubs and plants, flower-beds and fruit-trees, arbours and shady shrubberies. A clear brook flowed in various windings through the garden; rushing in a cascade from a rock, it afterwards formed a round lake, where in the cool valley a mill was clacking. In the finest spots of the garden were mossy seats and verdant bowers.

Theodore could not cease gazing upon and admiring all this beauty; he walked by the side of his father, mostly in silence, but at times he would exclaim: "O my father, how beautiful and how lovely is this garden!"

His father told him how, twelve years ago, this had been a desert place and marshy ground, and that the new proprietor had arranged and planted it all so beautifully. Then the boy's astonishment increased, and he praised the skilful and judicious man, who had changed the appearance of the place so pleasantly, and made it so lovely and agreeable.



When they had received many things, and were tired with walking, the father took the boy through the shrubberies to the cascade of the brook, and they sat down by the slope of the hill. Here they heard the rushing of the water, which threw itself foaming over the rocks, and listened to the songs of the nightingales which were hidden in bushes, and accompanied the noise of the water. Then Theodore thought that he had never before heard the nightingales sing so sweetly.

While they were sitting and listening, they heard the voices of children and of a man. They were the children of the miller, a boy and a girl, who led their grandfather, a blind old man, between them, and spoke to him of the blooming shrubs and trees by the way-side, cheering him with their loving words.

Then they took their grandfather to an arbour, to a seat among the singing nightingales, and kissed him, and ran into the garden to fetch flowers and fruit for him.

The old man smiled; and when he was alone, he took off his cap and prayed with a joyful countenance. Then Theodore and his father were touched to the heart, and they prayed, and praised God in union with the old man. Theodore wept, overcome by the feelings of his soul. Soon after, the children came back, singing merrily. They brought fragrant flowers and ripe fruit for their blind grandfather.

Theodore said to his father, when they returned home: "Oh, how rich and beautiful was this morning!"

## THE MOORISH SLAVE AND THE GREEK.

PHILEMON, the elder of the church at Smyrna, came one day with joyful countenance to the Bishop Ignatius, and said: "I have won a soul for the kingdom of God. Behold, an Ethiopian slave desires to become a Christian."

Then the bishop said: "Knoweth he the Lord and his word?" And Philemon answered and said: "He has lacked instruction from his youth up, and his heart is ignorant. But since he has seen our congregation, he wishes to become a Christian. What hinders our baptising him?"

Then Ignatius answered and said: "There was once a rich man who possessed many fields around his dwelling, and beauteous gardens well planted with trees and shrubs. In the midst was a hill, from whence could be seen the country round about—a great expanse. Then the owner called his gardener, and said: 'It grieves me to see this barren hill rising amidst fruitful meadows and fields, and affording neither tree nor shade. What a pleasant sight will it be if we plant it with high shady trees!'

"The gardener answered: 'This has been my wish and intention a long time. Instead of the barren stones and the useless weeds which cover it now, the new plantation would be an ornament to the landscape.'

"Then his master commanded him, saying: 'Go, and take the best trees from the plantation, and plant them on the hill.' But the gardener smiled, and said: 'In this barren and stony soil? It were pity for the noble trees that they should wither. Let me first cultivate the soil of the hill, and cover it with good earth instead of the stones, and then the good plants will grow.'"

Thus spoke the bishop. "I understand thee," answered Philemon; and he took the Ethiopian to the school.

Some time after, another came, desiring to become a Christian, a Greek who feared God, and repented in his heart of his sins.

Then Philemon said to the bishop: "I will take him to the school."

But Ignatius answered and said: "Bring him to me, that I may baptise him."

Philemon marvelled, and asked: "Why didst thou not admit the Moorish slave? Hast thou forgotten thy parable?"

Then the pious bishop said: "Dost thou see barren stones here, or knowest thou not the living germ? My friend, plant it in good ground, and water it, and it will prosper."

## THE SCHOOL.

ONE day Bishop Clement visited the school of the Christian church at Rome. He found the master sitting on the ground, and the children playing and sporting about him; some plucked his hair and beard, others clung to his garments; but all were laughing and screaming, so that the school was filled with tumultuous noise and uproar.

When the bishop entered, a profound silence ensued, and Clement took the master aside, looked gravely at him, and disapproved of his disorderly conduct with the children. "Are such things fit for a teacher in the church of the Lord?" said he.

Papias, the master, answered and said: "Did not Jesus himself suffer the children to come to him, and forbade them not, but caressed them?"

"Yes," said the holy Clement; "but he laid his hands on them, and took them in his arms, and blessed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God."



## THE ANGRY FATHER.

ONE day Sadi was reading the holy Scriptures; but suddenly he closed the book, and looked stern and serious.

Allmed perceived it, and asked the youth: "What ails thee, Sadi? why does thy countenance change?"

Sadi answered: "The Scripture speaks here of the wrath of God, and in other places he is called love. This seems hard and contradictory."

Then his master said calmly: "Shall not the Scriptures

— speak humanly to human beings? Thou takest no offence when mortal members are attributed to the Most High."

"No," said the youth, "that is innocent figurative language; but anger—"

Then Allmed interrupted him, saying: "I will relate to thee a tale. There lived two rich merchants in Alexandria, who had two sons of equal age. They sent them to Ephesus on affairs of their trade. Both youths had been well taught in the faith of their fathers.

"When they had lived for some time at Ephesus, they were dazzled by the splendour and the pleasures of the town, and were seduced to deny the faith of their fathers, and to bow down in idolatrous worship in the temple of Diana.

"A friend in Ephesus communicated this to Kleon, one of the fathers in Alexandria. When Kleon had read the letter, he was grieved in his heart, and very wroth with the young man. Then he went to the other, and told him of their apostasy, and his grief.

"But the other laughed, and said: 'If my son carry on his trade the better for it, I shall easily console myself.'

"Then Kleon turned away from him, and his anger increased."

Now Allmed said to the youth: "Which of these two fathers seemeth to thee the wiser and better?"

Sadi answered and said: "He who was angry."

"And who," asked his tutor, "was the most loving father?"

The youth answered again: "He who was angry."

"But was not Kleon angry with his child?" asked

Allmed. And Sadi answered: "Not with his child, but with his apostasy and transgression."

"What seemeth to thee to be the origin of such anger at transgression?" asked the master; and the youth answered, "The holy love of truth."

"Behold, my son," said the old man, "if thou only art able to explain the divine by the divine, thou wilt no longer take offence at the human word."

When Sadi had sat for some time in thought, he looked at his tutor; and Allmed said to him: "Thou seemest not yet satisfied,—a question is on thy lips."

Then the youth answered and said: "Yes, my father, it seemeth to me very daring to speak in such a way of the Highest and Purest."

"Indeed," said the old man, "it is a human expression, and I commend the fear of thy heart. But, behold, my Sadi, when the faithless son, after acknowledging his fall, may have thought, in an hour of repentance, of the time of his innocence and his pious father, how thinkest thou, would then the heart of his father have appeared to him, even if he were not wroth?"

"Ah," said the youth, "I understand thee, my father. His father must have appeared angry to him—and the holy Scriptures speak to a fallen race."

## THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

A MOTHER was sitting with Adelaide, her first-born fair and lovely daughter, on a hill which bounded the quiet valley where they dwelt. A clear rivulet flowed by the side of the hill; waving rushes, verdant grass, and gay flowers grew in abundance on its banks. The kind mother was lost in sweet recollections and thoughts of past times. In the meantime the young girl went down to the rivulet and gathered a nosegay of forget-me-nots, which she presented with a sweet smile to her mother. Then she asked innocently: "Why do you call these flowers forget-me nots?"

"You know," replied the mother, "what the words forget me not mean and imply. When you pronounce them, they rise to your lips from the abundance of your heart, and the words become the expression of your feeling; but if you offer this flower to some one with the same wish, then the word of your heart blooms in the sky-blue blossom. Do not you think its simple form very suitable? It needs no fragrance, — even as pure feelings need not many words."

"But how did the delicate little flower obtain the lovely name?" asked Adelaide.

The mother answered: "My dear child, Nature is as a mother to mankind. To him who loves her, she gives



every where the beautiful, and with the beautiful the good and true, if he will seek and know it. For man must first have it in himself, before he is able to comprehend the image which Nature offers him. She gives only the symbol, —the higher must be engendered in himself."

Then the mother took out a little portrait, and asked Adelaide: "Do you know this picture?"

"Oh, how should I not!" answered she; "it is my father, who is now abroad. Oh, how beautiful! I see him smile! I hear him speak!"

"I too, Adelaide," said the mother with deep emotion. "But could it be so, if we did not bear him in our hearts? And if the portrait were by far more beautiful, we should not hear him speak, nor see him smile. You would not thus look at it, and say: 'It is my father!'"

"Look you, Adelaide: when I was a girl like you, and your father lived on the other side of the brook, he came over here, and we loved each other. And when he parted from me, I accompanied him as far as this rivulet. But before he went, he picked a flower, gave it to me, and said tenderly: 'Lina, forget me not!' Since then the simple little flower always repeats to me the sweet words."

Then Adelaide looked at her mother, and said: "Has it the pretty name since that time?"

"No," replied the mother; "but it received it in this manner, and the true and good is always young and new. At that time I first comprehended the meaning and sense of the name; for what your heart does not comprehend, you will never understand.

"I loved your father," continued the mother; "he was a noble youth. Thus the flower became to me an image of my love and of all love, and will be so forever."

"But," asked Adelaide, "why is the flower an emblem of love, my dear mother? is there anything in its form that made it chosen for this purpose?"

"My beloved child," answered the mother, "you will learn this when you know your heart better. For see, the floweret blooms and grows in lowly modesty and innocence. And this is also the distinguishing mark of love. Neither impetuosity nor passion are to be found in her. Alas, Adelaide, there is a false love, which is not worth the name!"

"And see," continued the mother, "the flower grows and blooms by the clear brook, which flows through our valley. Is it not as if the brook were wreathed with flowers, and as if little stars were glittering in the sky, which is reflected in its smooth surface? Behold, my child, this love ennobles life, and therefore is our house so calm and cheerful, because love dwells there.

"And now, my Adelaide, observe the beautiful colour of the simple flower. It wears the hue of heaven. Thus also love is a heavenly plant, sprung from heavenly seed, and bearing heavenly flowers."

Thus spoke the mother; and offered one of the flowers to her daughter with a sweet smile, saying: "Thou also, Adelaide, my beloved child, forget me not!"

Adelaide nestled close to her mother; a bright tear of joy was glistening in her eye, and she answered: "I have

no need of the flower, dear mother, nor of the picture ; for I have yourself."

The mother said: "Remember, then, what the flower taught you by the mouth of your mother."

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### THE SIGN OF NOAH.

WHEN Noah, the second progenitor of the human race, was well stricken in years, and felt his end approaching, he assembled his children and grandchildren, and made a great feast.

After they were all come, and had eaten and drunk, Noah commanded his sons to bring in the delicious wine, which he himself had grown and pressed. The wine was brought, sparkling in a beautiful vessel, and Noah said: "A new generation has begun with us. The old one degenerated and became the slave of nature, over which it was to have dominion. By its cowardice it lost its dignity ; therefore it was overpowered and consumed. Jehovah himself mourned for the destroyed race. With us a new one begins. But Jehovah has set a sweet sign in the clouds, the bow of peace, that we might be mindful of the heavenly everlasting covenant.

"Behold, I also leave you an emblem and a sign on earth whereby ye shall remember your progenitor,—even the vine which I have planted. If you misuse its delicious

fruit, then it will repeat unto you the fearful lesson of the destroyed world.

“But no, ye will not do this thing. Let it be an emblem to remind you of your dignity. For the nature of the new plant is full of weakness; born from the dust, it creeps in the dust until the elm-tree offers its aid, that it may rise and gain strength by twining itself round the branches. Thus also man is born feeble, a child of dust, and earth draws him down. But he strives upwards, and the bow of the eternal covenant shineth down upon him in radiant glory, like the outstretched arm of Jehovah. So let the new generation know their weakness and their dignity; while they walk in humility on earth, let them strive toward heaven.

“Willingly doth the firm tree offer its supporting branches to the humble vine, which twines itself round them by a hundred tendrils, and approaches the celestial bow. Thus love is the first cause of its upward striving. The germ of the heavenly covenant is love — and *love* also is its accomplishment.

“Raised above the dust, and in loving union with the higher being, the vine grows up firmly. From the *earth* it draws the nourishment of life, but on *high* it forms the coarser material into the protecting leaf, the fragrant blossom, and the refreshing grape. To this end, it needs that light from above shall pervade and invigorate it. He alone who opens his heart to the divine is a member of the eternal covenant.

“And when the grape is fully ripe, it is cut from the

earthly stem; its form is changed in the crushing wine-press.

“Behold, how the dark red juice of the vine sparkleth in the goblet — calm and clear, a son of light! And now taste; how it fills the heart with joy and gladness!”

Then Noah sent the goblet round, and received them into the divine covenant.



## THE PRESENT.

WHEN the time of the father's birthday arrived, his three youngest children secretly collected the most beautiful flowers, and wove them, in the absence of their father, into a handsome wreath; and they could not close their eyes all night for joy.

When the day dawned, they went all three into their father's chamber with naked feet, lest he should hear them, carrying the garland of flowers between them; and they put it down on their father's bed very gently, that he might not be aware of it. The father perceived it, however; but he pretended to be asleep.

When it was morning, the father came with the beautiful wreath, and said: “Where are the little angels who brought me flowers in the night, when I was asleep?”

And the children came and hung upon him, and kissed their father, and were full of delight.

Then there came a messenger bringing a nice little

hooped barrel; it was filled with delicious wine of Hochheim, to gladden the father's heart. The father rejoiced, when he saw that it was sent by his eldest son: and the children danced round their father and the little barrel.

After a while, the father stepped to the table, and found there a fine large sheet of paper, on which the second son, who had come home from abroad, had written a beautiful and touching poem. When the father read it, he smiled, and his tears fell on the paper.

Then the three little ones looked at their father, and said: "Dear father, we cannot yet give you or work you any thing; we are still too young."

Then the father took them all three, the little maiden and the two boys, to his bosom, pressed them to his heart, and said; "Oh, do not think that your gift is insignificant in my eyes. Do not your little hearts beat for me as well as the others? and my father's heart beats for you all."



## THE CAGED NIGHTINGALE.

ONE day a countryman entered the splendid mansion of a rich man of rank. There he heard the clear song of a bird in a gilded cage. He approached, and behold, it was a nightingale! Sorrowfully he stood leaning on his staff, and listened.

Then the servants of the rich man came to him, and said: "What is amiss, that thou standest thus in thought?"

The countryman answered: "I am surprised that you and your master can bear to hear the sad plaintive song of the imprisoned bird in your glittering house."

"Thou fool!" replied one of the servants; "does the song of the nightingale appear sad to thee in the fields and thickets?"

"Not so, in sooth," answered the countryman; "it fills my heart with quiet joy and admiration."

"Do thy nightingales sing in different tones from this one?" asked the servant with a jeering smile.

"Indeed they do!" said the countryman. "Our nightingales proclaim from the green and blooming branches the praise of the renewed beauty of creation; under the azure of heaven they sing the song of liberty, and over their breeding mates the anthems of love."

At these words the servants burst into the loud laughter of derision, and called the countryman a fool.

The countryman answered nothing; but returned to his rural abode and to his fields.





## THE GRAINS OF SEED.

A FATHER had three sons, with whom he lived on a large island. He always provided for them and for their children, that they never suffered want. But when he felt his end drawing nigh, he called his sons, and said to them: "I must leave you now, for the hour of my departure is come; "now you must provide for your own wants, as I have provided for you hitherto. You may no more remain together,—you must go forth to the east, to the west, and to the south; but each of you take these grains of seed, and



keep them carefully. And when I shall be no more with you, choose a piece of ground, and plough the land, that it may be fit to receive sunshine and rain. When you have done this, sow the seeds and cover them with earth; then you will reap fruit in abundance for your sustenance and enjoyment. Watch and guard the field well, that the wild beasts may not enter and destroy it."

After the father had spoken thus, he died, and they buried him.

Then the sons separated, and went, as their father had commanded them, to different parts of the island, taking the seed with them.

When the eldest son arrived at the part allotted to him, he took the seed which his father had given him, and said: "Why should I do this wrong to the earth, and labour to pierce her breast with the iron of the plough? The sun will not fail to warm, and the rain to moisten her, that she may bring forth fruit." Then he strewed the seed on the hard ground; but it did not grow, nor yield any fruit. So the eldest son was wroth, and forgot the gift of his father.

The second son went towards the south; when he arrived at the place where he should dwell, he saw that it was a very pleasant place, and he said in his heart: "Why should I take trouble to till the ground, so long as the land yields of itself provision in abundance?" And he threw the seed aside and left it. After he had consumed the fruits of the land, he sowed the seed of his father; but it grew not, for the worms had gnawed it, and he sowed nothing but

the husks. Then he scorned the gift of his father and forgot it.

But the youngest son did as his father had commanded him. He chose the best ground, manured and dug it with great care, made a fence all round, and sowed the seed. Then the seed put forth blades, and grew and yielded fruit sixty-fold and an hundred-fold. Thus he did for several successive years, and his fields increased in number, and the harvests were more and more plentiful, and he and his children and grandchildren had abundance.

After some years, when the elder brothers were in want and poverty, and heard of the riches of their younger brother, they went to him, and saw the fields round about covered with rich ears and sheaves; and they heard the merry shouts of the reapers in the fields,—for it was the time of harvest.

Then the brothers were astonished, and said to each other: “We have done wrong in despising the gift of our father.”



## OSSIAN.

OSSIAN, the son of Fingal, the blind singer of Morven, sat once, in the decline of day, at the entrance of his rocky cave; Malvina, the blooming daughter of Toscar, stood beside the old man.

Then he asked: "Has the sun finished his course, and gild the evening clouds in the western sky?"

"The sun is now setting," answered Malvina, and sighed.

"Why dost thou sigh, Malvina?" asked the aged man.

"Alas, my father," replied the maiden, "that thou canst not see the light of morning or of eve!"

"And alas," added the old man with a smile, "not even the friendly countenance of my daughter Malvina! But do I not hear, Malvina, the tones of thy sweet voice to the sound of my harp, and the whisperings of spirits among its chords?"

"How art thou able to hear the voices of the invisible spirits, my father?" asked Malvina.

"He alone," said the old man, "to whom the visible earth is dead and perished, can hear the low whisper of the higher world. Malvina, his eye is closed already before death comes, and to him earth sleeps, wrapped in night and darkness. As the bright stars shine only on the veiled earth, thus harmonious lights descend upon him from above, touching alike the chords of his harp, and of his yearning spirit. Give me the harp, Malvina."

Thus said Ossian; silently Malvina reached him the harp, and the blind singer poured forth his soul in the sounding strings.

## THE FLAME.

## I.

In the deepest cell of the human breast  
A holy silence seemeth,  
And, throned in the gloom of that temple of rest,  
A flamelet in secret gleameth.

## II.

A calm, clear light doth that flame impart,  
A starlet of heaven resembling ;  
The breast is its temple, its altar the heart,  
Where now and for ever 'tis trembling.

## III.

The power of darkness may veil it o'er,  
And quench for a while its lightness ;  
But ever again it aloft shall soar,  
To gleam with renewed brightness.

## IV.

The pilgrim it lights, who in gloom must stray  
In regions where thorns are growing ;  
It cheereth the lowly, and heralds the way  
To the heights with radiance glowing.

## V.

And when to the combat the soldier must speed,  
Then stirreth the flame within him,  
Nerving his arm to each glorious deed,  
And helping the palm-branch to win him.

## VI.

The combat over and gain'd the field,  
To silence and calm returning,  
In a flood of light is the flame reveal'd,  
In the eyes of the victor burning.

## VII.

When the careless pilgrim would downward wrest  
The pleasures that here enwreath him,  
Then trembles the flame in his secret breast,  
To tell of the chasm beneath him.

## VIII.

In a thousand sparks that so brightly glow,  
To the flushing cheek 'tis thronging ;  
In the heaving bosom it layeth low  
Each foolish striving and longing.

## IX.

Deceive not thyself, thou foolish wight,  
That weenest to quench its power,  
Thou mayst veil for a season its holy light,  
Then in freedom aloft 'twill tower.

## X.

In the hour of thy safety the flamelet bright  
Will wake into conflagration ;  
And its fire shall flash up in the blackness of night,  
To thy anguish and desolation.

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## NIGHT AND MORNING.

Not long after midnight, Allmed, the wise teacher, called Sadi, his disciple, from his couch, and said : " Arise, for we will go to the house of thy father before the heat of the day."

Then Sadi rose joyfully, took his garment, and followed his master. " Ah, what a night !" said the youth, when they came forth into the field.

Then Allmed answered : " We will behold its beauty on Mount Tabor." Now they ascended the mountain and reached the summit, and sat down there.

A solemn calmness was on all things ; the sky was clear as a beautiful sapphire, the stars stood glittering like a countless host, and the ocean shone from afar.

Sadi rose from his seat, and turned his eyes to heaven and towards the sea, and was mute with awe. And Allmed lifted up his voice, and uttered from time to time a sacred sentence : " ' Lift up thine eyes, and behold who hath created all these things.' — ' He telleth the number of the

stars, and calleth them all by their names.' 'Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite.' 'Thou, Lord, alone hast made heaven and earth, and all things therein, the sea, and all that in it is; thou quickenest all things, and the heavens worship before thee.' 'Lord, how great and manifold are thy works!' 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Man is nothing before thee.'

When Allmed spoke thus in the silence of night, Sadi trembled and hid his face, for fear came upon him.

Then Allmed exclaimed: "Behold, the day is dawning!" And lo, it was the time of twilight, and the wings of the morning were spread over the ends of the earth. And the sea appeared between its shores, and the trees and the mountain bright and rosy, and the clouds in the eastern sky shone like purple and rubies. Then the sun rose, the mountains smoked, and the ocean glowed like liquid gold; the voices of the birds were heard on the boughs, the beasts of the field roamed abroad, and men walked through the corn and in the gardens and vineyards. The morning sun fell brightly on the countenance of Sadi and of his master Allmed.

Then Sadi looked with delight on the face of his tutor. Allmed lifted up his voice, and said: "Behold, Sadi, as is his power, even so is his love!"

Then Sadi fell on his master's neck, and wept for joy. Allmed stretched out his arms over him, and blessed the youth.

Then they took their staffs, and wandered to Sadi's home; and Sadi was the whole day gentle and kind. His

parents rejoiced at their son, and said: "How can we recompense Allmed for what he does for our child?"

But they knew not what had taken place on the mountain.

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### THE LILY.

GODFREY, the son of pious parents, stood one day before a lily, with folded hands, lost in thought, while silent devotion and deep emotion shone in his countenance.

Thus his father found him: "What are you thinking about, my son?" asked he.

Then Godfrey answered: "I am thinking of the word which the Saviour pronounced on this flower, when he exalted it above the glory of Solomon."

"And why does this appear so remarkable to you?" asked the father; "you seem to be moved."

"I feel as though I saw him standing by the flower, and heard its praises from his lips, O my father!" answered the boy. "Then it seemed to me strange and moving, that he should thus have condescended."

"You are right, my son," replied the father; "I commend and share your feelings. For did he not come to regenerate the things of earth, and to loosen the bonds of death? Thus by the word of his mouth hath he made the quiet lovely flower to be a comforter to troubled souls, even while he praised its beauty. Behold, now the lily stands as an earthly image of heavenly wisdom and love, which



combines truth, goodness, and beauty in an everlasting union. And doth it perish?" continued the father, after a pause; "do you not to-day behold the lily glowing with the same beauty as when the Lord looked on it?"

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THE ROUGH JEWEL.

A ROUGH jewel lay in the sand among many common stones. A boy picked up some of these to use them for playthings, and took them home together with the jewel; but he did not know this. The boy's father looked on when he was playing; he perceived the rough jewel, and said to his son: "Give me that stone."

The boy did so, and smiled, for he thought: "What is my father going to do with this stone?"

The father took the stone, and polished it skilfully into regular planes and angles,—and behold, a diamond glittered brilliantly.

"See," said the father, "here is the stone you gave me."

The boy wondered at the splendour and brilliancy of the stone, and exclaimed: "My father, how could you accomplish this?"

The father said: "I knew the hidden virtue, and the value of the stone; therefore I freed it from its coating of dross. Now it sparkles with its natural radiance."

When the boy had increased in years, the father gave him the precious stone, as an emblem of the worth and dignity of life.

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THE SHEPHERD-GIRL OF BETHLEHEM.

At Bethlehem, on the mountains, lived a man called Shamma, who possessed a great estate and numerous herds; but he had only one daughter, whose name was Shulamith. She was very beautiful to look upon, but her soul was fairer still, rich in every virtue and grace. All the shepherds of the mountain wished to wed her, and wooed the maiden: but most of them thought only of the rich inheritance that would be hers; and they quarrelled for her, and there was great dissension among the shepherds.

Among them was Gideon, the son of a friend of Shamma, named Ephraim, who had died long ago. But Shamma honoured the youth before all the others, because he supported his mother faithfully. And Gideon strove not with the shepherds, but wandered in silence and alone, tending his lambs.

One day one of the shepherds said to Gideon: "Why dost thou not woo and strive with us for Shulamith, the fairest of the daughters of Judah?"

Then Gideon answered and said: "Why should I strive with you for her? Shulamith is my bride, and her father has promised her to me."

Now the shepherds hated and envied the youth. But Gideon was content and cheerful, and took Shulamith to wife; and she bore him sons and daughters, and their house was blessed.



THE PERSIAN, THE JEW, AND THE CHRISTIAN.

A JEW entered a Persian temple, and saw there the sacred fire. He said to the priest: "How, do you worship the fire?"

"Not the fire," answered the priest; "it is to us an emblem of the sun, and of his animating light."

Then the Jew asked: "Do you adore the sun as a deity? Do you not know that he also is a creature of the Almighty?"

"That we know," replied the priest; "but the sensual man needs an outward sign to comprehend the highest. And is not the sun the emblem of the invisible incomprehensible light, which preserves and blesses all things?"

Then the Israelite answered: "But does your nation distinguish the image from the original? They call the sun their god, and sinking even from this to a lower image, they kneel before the earthly flame. You dazzle the eye of the body, but darken that of the mind; and, in presenting to them the terrestrial light, you take from them the celestial. 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any image or likeness.'"

"How do you name the Supreme Being?" asked the Persian.

The Jew answered: "We call him Jehovah Adonai, that is, the Lord who was, who is, and shall be."

"Your word is great and glorious," said the Persian; "but it is terrible."

Now a Christian approached, and said: "We call him Abba, father."

Then the Gentile and the Jew regarded each other with surprise, and said: "Your word is the nearest and the highest. But who gives you the courage to call the Eternal thus?"

"Who," said the Christian, "but the Father himself?" Then he expounded to them the mystery of the manifestation of the Father in the Son, and the tidings of redemption.

And when they heard this, they believed, and lifted up

their eyes joyfully to heaven, and said, full of fervour and of the spirit: "Father, dear Father!"

And then all three joined their hands, and called each other brethren.



THE COUNTRYMAN AND HIS SON.

A COUNTRYMAN possessed a great estate, many fields, gardens, and meadows, large herds of cattle and sheep, and many men-servants and maid-servants; and the order and riches of his house were noted in the whole country; but still more famous were the name and the wisdom of the owner, who knew how to manage everything carefully and prudently, so that nothing was wanting.

Now it came to pass that the master of this estate was obliged to go on a journey for several months. And he called his son, and said: "Behold, my son, I must go abroad; guard the house and the farm, which I confide to your care until I return."

The youth was dismayed at the task; but his father bade him farewell, and departed.

Now Joses—for so the youth was called—undertook the care of the extensive estate at first timidly and with fear; but he took courage, and said: "My father hath confided it to me, therefore I must fulfil my work."

Then Joses worked vigorously, and the faults he made at first became fewer and fewer.

After many months the father returned; and when he examined his estate, and the fields and the herds, he found each single thing and the whole farm in good order. And the fame of the son had been noised about the whole country, and the people said: "Like father, like son."

Now when the father praised the good management of his son, the youth said: "But, my father, what if I had had ill success?"

Then the father smiled, and said: "I knew your abilities, but you did not know them. I wished to give you self-reliance; therefore I demanded a great thing of you. You were a youth; but now you are become a man."



MAN AND THE SUN.

SHEM, the son of Noah, stood one day with raised head looking at the sun, lost in meditation.

Then Noah, his father, came to him, and said: "What seest thou?"

Shem answered and said: "I contemplate that celestial form which the Lord has wonderfully clad with splendour. It runs its race high in the heavens, and deep beneath it are the storms and the water-floods. Then I think in my heart: Would that the Lord had made man thus!"

Then Noah said: "My son, desire not such things as are not given to thee; thou mightest sink lower, if thy wish were granted, and lose the good which is now thine own."

“How could that be, my father?” answered the youth; “were not this to be exalted—to be like the sun?”

Noah answered and said: “Thou wouldst then be greater than Mount Ararat, nay, larger than the world whereon we live. Dost thou think to gain in dignity thereby? Thou wouldst for ever walk in the same course, unable to turn to the right or to the left, after thine own will. Now thou canst look up to the sun; but he cannot look down upon thee, much less can he look up to know and praise Him who hath made him. In solitude he walks in the sky, without love or hope. A day will come when he will be extinguished like a lamp, and when his rising shall be waited for in vain; but thou wilt put off the garment of mortality, which binds thee to the earth, and shalt wander above all the suns in eternal and regenerate being. Wouldst thou exchange thy being and existence with theirs?”

“No, my father,” answered the youth; “I am ashamed of my sinful wish.”

THE SHELLS.

A FATHER returned from the sea-side, and brought home for his son some pretty shells, which he had gathered on the beach. The boy's delight was inexpressible when he received the beautiful and many-coloured productions of the sea; he arranged them with care and attention in a

neat little box, and exhibited them to his playmates; so that there was much talk among the children of the village about the beautiful shells and the treasure-box of the boy. He counted them every morning, discovered daily some new beauty, and gave to each shell a name.

For the love and delight of childish simplicity are ingenious, and rich in pleasant words.

After some months, his father thought, I will prepare for him a greater pleasure and delight. And he said to him: "We will go to the sea-side; there you will admire the number of beautiful shells, and may collect and choose as many as you desire for yourself."

When they went to the beach at the ebb of the tide, the boy was surprised at the abundance of shells of divers colours which lay scattered about; and he went up and down collecting them. But each appeared to him more beautiful than the last, and he continued picking up new ones, and exchanging those which he had for those which he found. Thus he went on, choosing, changing, and doubting, and afterwards became confused. Tired, at length, with stooping, and examining, and comparing, he threw away all the shells he had collected; and when he returned home, empty-handed and out of humour, he gave away all those which had before afforded him so much pleasure.

Then his father was very sorry, and said: "I have not acted wisely; but my foolishness has taken from my child his simplicity, and from both of us our joy."

NEHEMIAH AND ELIMAH.

At the time of the captivity of Judah, Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, dwelt at the court of the king of Persia, at Shushan, the capital of the country. And Nehemiah spake one day with Elimah, the king's steward, of the worship and the law of Israel. Elimah worshipped the sun, according to the custom of the Persians.

: And Elimah said to Nehemiah: "Our worship is better than yours; for we see our god with our eyes."

Nehemiah answered and said: "Dost thou prize the body higher than the spirit, and the king's sceptre and sword above his mercy and justice?"

Then Elimah kept silence.

Another time Elimah spake to Nehemiah, and said: "Our god is near to us; but who may touch yours?"

Then Nehemiah asked: "Do you touch and handle your god with your hands?"

And Elimah answered: "What fool is he that would dare to do thus, and seek to reach heaven with his hands?"

Nehemiah answered and said: "What you dare not do with your visible god, should we do it with Him, the Invisible, who hath made heaven and earth, and all that therein is?"

Then Elimah kept silence.

Another time, Elimah said to Nehemiah: "Who can

comprehend it, that your God, as ye say, careth for each separate man, and is mindful of every life?"

Nehemiah answered and said: "Does not your god, whom ye adore, send his rays from above on every seed that it may shoot forth, on every blade of grass that it may grow, on every ear of corn that it may ripen?"

Then Elimah was silent. But Nehemiah continued, and said: "Elimah, my brother, lift up thy heart from the creature to the Creator, from the light to the origin of the light. Then wilt thou acknowledge the sun to be a wonder of his hand and a work of his omnipotence, and worshipping him in humility, thou shalt feel thyself greater than the day-star. For thou art a child of the living God, and canst call him father. This the sun cannot do."

Then Elimah kept silence, and searched his heart, and believed.

After some time, Nehemiah asked Elimah, his friend: "What thinkest thou now of the sun, which thou didst worship?"

Elimah answered and said: "Since I know Him, the sun appears to me like a living well on the way to Him."



THE ASCENT OF TABOR.

THREE youths, whose parents dwelt in the valley of Sharon, resolved in company to ascend Mount Tabor, the most magnificent of the mountains of Judah, to behold from its summit the rising of the sun, and the glorious

beauty of the land. They wandered through the valley in the heat of the day, and reached at night an inn at the foot of the mountain. And they said: "Let us rest here and gather new strength, that we may be able to ascend the mountain before the day dawns."

The two elder youths, Dothan and Eli, did accordingly; they ate some milk and bread, and then retired to rest. But the youngest, named Joses, said: "I shall be with you presently; you need not wait for me." When the two others had gone to rest, Joses went to another room of the house, where he heard the sound of cymbals and flutes. There was here an assembly of thoughtless youths and maidens, who were amusing themselves with playing, and dancing, and drinking full goblets of wine. They said to Joses: "Come and drink with us, and let thy heart be merry." This pleased Joses, and he drank with them till he was drunk; and they carried him away at midnight, and laid him on a bed.

When the day dawned, Dothan and Eli awoke and rose; but Joses lay and slept. And they tried to rouse him, and called to him. When he opened his eyes, he said: "No; leave me; I cannot go with you, for I am very sick and weary." Then he fell asleep again.

The two others departed, and ascended vigorously to the top of Mount Tabor, and they beheld the dawning of day, the glory of the morning light, and the rising of the sun, emerging, as it were, from the ocean. And they fell down and worshipped; then they embraced, and vowed eternal friendship with each other before God.

When they returned to the inn, they found Joses with



heavy eyes, leaning his head on his hands, and complaining of great pains.

But the youths began to talk of the glory of God, which they had seen, and their eyes beamed. Then Joses wept and lamented bitterly, that by his own fault and his low desires he had lost the purer enjoyment; and he vowed never again to give room in his heart to temptation.



DAVID'S HARP.

ONE day, David the king of Israel sat on Mount Sion. His harp was before him, and he leaned his head upon it.

Then the prophet Gad came to him, and said; "Whereon muses my lord the king?"

David answered: "On the continual changes of my destiny. How many songs of gratitude and joy have I sung to this harp! but how many songs also of mourning and sorrow!"

"Be thou like unto the harp," said the prophet.

"What meanest thou?" asked the king.

"Behold," answered the man of God, "both thy sorrow and thy joy drew heavenly sounds from the harp, and animated its strings. Thus let joy and sorrow form thy heart and thy life to a celestial harp."

Then David arose and touched the strings.

WINFRID.

WHEN Winfrid, the faithful teacher, was driven by the spirit to leave his kindred that he might preach the Gospel to the Germans, his friends prevented him, and said: "Tarry in this land, in thy home; thou mayest do good and fight against evil here, if thou desirest to do so. The stranger will refuse thy benefits, and kill thee."

But Winfred answered and said: "First hear a dream which I dreamed, and then judge. Methought I was in a land devastated in years past by wars, and converted into a wilderness. Round about me I saw only the ruins of former dwellings, and all life seemed to be extinguished. As I wandered in sorrow, I met on the mountains a little tribe of children, naked and bare; they were eating roots which they had dug out of the ground, and some gnawed the raw flesh of animals which they had caught. Then I had pity on the children and their savage state, and I called to them, and said: 'Where is your home, and where are your fathers and mothers?'

"Then the children cried with a wild voice: 'The war has destroyed them! The war has destroyed them!' and they ran and vanished from my sight.

"I stood full of compassion and sadness, and turned my face homewards. Behold, then I heard behind me a laugh of scorn, and a voice saying: 'Thou hast the goods of this

earth, and full houses and barns! Go thy way, thou rich man; eat, drink, and be merry.'

"Then the spirit roused me, and I turned about, exclaiming: 'As the Lord and my soul live, I will be a father to the orphans!' and I went to take them to me. Then I heard a gentle sighing, and awoke."

When he had spoken thus, his kinsmen said: "What a dream is this! Art thou a rich man?"

Winfred answered and said: "Gold and silver have I not; but am I not rich in knowledge, courage, and faith? And why are my eyes turned towards the orphan nation, that I have pity on them? I will lead them to the truth!"

Then the others held their peace; and Winfred, the man of God, went forth into Germany, and abolished the idols on the high places and the oaks, though the people strove against him; and he taught them the words of faith, hope, and love. And they who received it were saved, and said: "He is rightly called Winfred, for he has won for us *peace*."* But others said: "He has done a good work;" and they called him Boniface.



THE TRANSGRESSION.

ERIC, the son of pious and affectionate parents, celebrated his twelfth birthday on a beautiful day in autumn. His

* Peace; the German is *Friede*.

parents gave him abundance of various presents, and permitted him to invite an assembly of his young friends.

They played together in the spacious garden, where also Eric had a little garden of his own with flowers and fruit-trees. By the wall of the garden were several young peach-trees, which bore fruit for the first time. They were nearly ripe, and the ruddy colour gleamed through the delicate and soft down which covered them. This fair appearance attracted the boys. But Eric said: "My father has forbidden me expressly to touch those peaches; they are the first fruits of the little trees: I have also my own garden with different kinds of fruit; come away; they might tempt us."

Then the boys said, "Why should we not taste them? To-day you are master of the garden, and none beside. Is not this your birthday, and are you not a year older now? You would not always be a child, to be led in leading-strings? Come only into our garden! No one prevents us there."

Thus the boys said. But Eric cried: "Ah, no! come away; my father has forbidden it."

Then the boys answered: "Your father does not see it; how should he know of it? And if he should ask, you may say, you know nothing about it."

"Fie!" answered Eric; "that would be an untruth, and the blush on my cheeks would soon betray me."

Then the eldest of the boys said: "Eric is right. Listen; I know another way. Listen, Eric; *we* will pick the fruit, then *you* can swear that you did not do it." Eric

and the others agreed to this, and they picked the fruit and ate it.

When evening approached, the boys went home. But Eric remained in the garden, for he feared to see the face of his father; and when he heard the door of the house creak, he trembled, and he was afraid in the dusk.

Now the father came himself; and when Eric heard his footsteps, he ran hastily to the other side of the garden to his own plot of ground. The father perceived that the trees were robbed, and he called out! "Eric, Eric! where are you?" When the boy heard his name called, he was still more frightened, and trembled.

Then his father came to him, and said: "Is this the celebration of your birthday, and your gratitude to me, that you rob my trees?"

Eric answered: "I did not touch the trees, my father; perhaps one of the boys did it."

Then his father took him into the house, and put Eric before him in the light of the candles, saying: "Will you deceive your father still?"

Then the boy turned pale, and trembled, and confessed it to his father with tears and entreaties.

But the father said: "From henceforth the garden will be locked to you."

Then his father turned away. But Eric could not sleep all night; he was terrified to be in the dark, he heard the palpitation of his heart, and when he slumbered, he was frightened by dreams. It was the worst night of his life.

The next morning Eric appeared pale and desponding, and his mother had pity on the boy. Therefore she said

to the father: "Eric mourns, and is very sad; and the locked garden is to him an emblem of the locked heart of his father."

The father answered: "I would have it so; for this reason did I lock the garden."

"Alas," said the mother, "he begins the new year of his life so sadly!"

"That it may become joyful," answered the father.

After some days, the mother said again to the father: "Alas, I fear Eric will doubt our love to him!"

"Not so," answered the father; "the consciousness of his guilt will not suffer him. Till now he enjoyed our love; now he must learn to acknowledge and prize it, that he may win it again."

"But," said the mother, "will it not appear to him in too severe a form?"

"Indeed," answered the father, "in the form of justice and wisdom. But in the consciousness of his fault he will learn to fear and esteem it. In time it will appear to him again in its original form, and he will once more, without fear, call it love. Thus it will be, his present sadness answers for it."

When a short time had elapsed, Eric came down one morning from his room, calmly and with a cheerful countenance. All the presents and gifts of his parents he had put together in a basket, which he set down before his father and mother.

Then his father asked: "What do you wish, Eric?" And the boy said: "I have been unworthy of the kindness and love of my parents; therefore I restore the gifts which

I do not deserve. But my heart bears me witness that from henceforth I shall begin a new life. Oh, pardon me, and take me and all that I have received from your love as a sacrifice!"

Then the father embraced his child, kissed him, and wept over him; and the mother did likewise.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

WHEN Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the commandments of the Lord, the people joined together in their folly, and resolved to make an idol and worship it. But they were at variance concerning the image they should choose, and disputed vehemently.

Then three men came forth from the people, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and they cried: "Let us hear the voices of the people; peradventure we may unite them, that unity may arise out of difference. Let each join him with whom he agrees."

And behold, Korah stood forth, and said: "Free power and might appear to me divine!" Then all those joined Korah who envied Moses' dominion over them, and coveted honour and power for themselves. And they cried: "Let Might be our God!"

Now Dathan came forth, and said: "Freedom in pleasure seemeth to me divine. What is our life in this wilderness? Nought but law and abstinence." Then all those

gathered themselves to Dathan who lusted for the fleshpots of Egypt. And they cried: "Let Pleasure be our God!"

Then Abiram stood up before the people, and said: "The splendour of gold and the abundance of riches seem divine to me; by these we gain power and pleasure." Then all the covetous and the slaves of Mammon joined themselves to Abiram, and they cried: "Let gold and silver be our god!"

Then the people shouted, and they called Aaron, and constrained him, and said: "Make us a god!"

And Korah commanded Aaron, and said: "Make me an image of power and might after the manner of the Egyptians." And Aaron took a pencil, and drew the head of a bull with large horns. Then Korah and his host cried: "It is well!"

Then said Dathan: "Why the head alone? Join unto the head the body, the sign of pleasure!" And Aaron joined to the head a fleshy neck and body. Thus the shape of a bull appeared. Then the people shouted, and cried: "Behold our god!"

But Abiram said to the people: "Bring now the golden earrings of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, that we may fashion it of gold."

So the golden calf was made, and all the people burned incense to the idol, and danced before it.

Now Moses came from the mountain with the tables of the law; and when he saw the image his spirit was wroth, and he said: "Ye have made the lusts of your flesh your idol; therefore shall your god go the way of all flesh!"

And he burned the golden calf, and strewed the ashes thereof in water, and gave it to the people to drink.

H A Z A E L.

HAZAEI, the son of an eastern prince, had been educated in the valley of the wise men, and had passed there the days of his boyhood. Then his father sent him to Persia to finish his education, and to learn the ways and manners of men. Perfect liberty was granted to the youth; but Serujah, his old master, secretly watched the life and doings of the prince.

When Hazael arrived in Persia, he was led away by the pleasures of the capital and the turmoil of luxurious life, so that he forgot his destination, and thoughtlessly gave up his heart to pleasure; he remembered no longer his royal calling.

When he was one day walking in the pleasure-gardens of Ispahan, Serujah passed him in the garb of a pilgrim, having a staff in his right hand.

But Hazael knew Serujah, and asked him: "Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?"

Serujah answered and said: "I know not."

Then the youth marvelled, and said: "Hast thou left thy home, and dost thou travel abroad not knowing whither?"

Serujah answered: "I have forgotten it; I walk to and fro, and the path which seems to me the widest and the most pleasant, that choose I."

“And whither will such bootless wandering lead thee?” asked the astonished youth.

Serujah answered: “I know not; why should I care?”

Then Hazael turned to those who stood around him, and said: “This man was the teacher of my youth, and full of wisdom; but, behold, he has grown foolish, and lacks understanding. Alas, how is he changed, and become like another being!”

Then Serujah threw down his wallet, and went to the youth, and said: “Thou sayest it, Hazael; my life has changed like as thine. Formerly I was thy guide, and thou didst follow me in the way which I showed thee. But now, since I have ceased to be thy guide, I have begun to follow thee. Behold, my wandering wherein I lose sight of the way and the goal is like thine; reason has departed from thee, even as it has quitted me. Who is the more foolish, thou or I?—and which of us is wandering in the worse path?”

Thus said Serujah. Then Hazael acknowledged his transgression, and returned to the way of wisdom, which Serujah had taught him.



TOBIAS

WHEN Tobias the younger was well stricken in years, having lived ninety-nine years joyfully in the fear of the Lord, he was attacked by an illness, and the end of his days drew nigh. His son Azarias stood weeping by his bed; for the painful struggles of his father rent his heart. But Tobias did not complain or lament; his soul was serene and his countenance cheerful, whenever the pains left him for a while.

Then Azarias said: "Ah, my father, I marvel to see

thee so calm and courageous in such a painful struggle, and at the approach of death."

Then Tobias opened his mouth and said: "Behold, I have often told thee of my journey from Nineveh to the land of Media, which my father commanded me to make in the days of my youth. After I had faithfully fulfilled my father's will, the Lord being my helper, the hour to return came. With joyful courage I began the toilsome journey homewards; for I had done my work, and drew nigh to the house of my father. The last days of my journey were the hardest, for I was obliged to traverse burning deserts, and to wander over a rugged and steep mountain; but the thought of my father and my home inspired me with courage, and strengthened my weary limbs. I increased my endeavours, reached home, and fell into my father's arms." A violent fit of pain seized the dying man. When it was over, he smiled, and continued, saying: "And what is a mortal father in comparison to the Eternal! Has He not guided me all my life, and sent me His angel at the time of danger and distress? And should He now forsake me on the last way? No; my pilgrimage is ended. I am going home."

After these words, Tobias blessed his children and grandchildren, and died in the arms of his son; and they buried him, and all his generation continued in holiness and uprightness.

THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.

A FATHER was walking with his two children, a boy and a girl, on the hills, and the children amused themselves with gathering strawberries, which grew in abundance by the way-side, and in the dells.

Suddenly the father heard the loud and joyful exclamations of his children, and he wondered what they could have found. He approached, and saw that the children had a nice-looking fruit like a cherry in their hands, and were about to eat it.

But the father took the berries out of their hands, threw them on the ground, and crushed them before their eyes. Then he pulled the plant out of the ground, and trod it under foot, together with the fruit which grew on it.

The children murmured, and looked askance at their father. The father was silent, and proceeded on his way.

At last the children asked : "How could you destroy the nice fruit, and mar our pleasure, dear father? Why did you so?"

"Children," answered the father, "if you had eaten this fruit, it would have been your death. It was nightshade, a deadly poison."

The children were ashamed, and thanked their father, and said : "Dear father, why did you not tell us so? We would not have grieved you then by our foolish murmuring."

The father answered: "It was your murmuring and ill-humour which prevented me from telling you. Did I hinder you from picking the sweet and wholesome strawberries? Now you know what kind of pleasures I would deny you."



THE STEERSMAN.

A SHIP was on the open sea, when a terrible storm rose. All who were in the ship despaired, and began to lament and to wail aloud. But the steersman was calm and composed; he looked at the compass, and steered the ship with his utmost skill.

When the passengers saw this, they took courage, and said: "Wilt thou save us?"

Then the steersman answered: "How can I promise such a thing? Can I command the storm? Be content that I do my duty."

Now the others began to lament again, for the storm increased. But the steersman remained calm, looked at the compass, and steered the ship amid the storm and the waves.

So they were tossed about, and the water rushed into the ship. Then the steersman said: "I cannot preserve the ship; but I hope to save your lives. Be prepared, therefore, for shipwreck." Now loud murmurs and lamentations arose; but the steersman remained calm, looked at the

needle, and told each sailor what he should do. Presently, as the steersman intended, the ship struck on a sand-bank near the shore; the fore part was immovable, but the stern was broken by the violence of the waves.

Then the steersman ordered those who could swim to throw themselves overboard, and make for the shore, while others escaped on boards and pieces of the ship. Thus they all reached the land in safety, the steersman last of all. Then the ship sunk.

When the people who had been saved saw the ship sinking, they murmured against the steersman for having run them on a sand-bank, and destroyed the ship and her whole cargo. But the steersman walked through the midst of them, and gave no heed to their reproaches.



M A T A T H I A S.

In the time of Antiochus, the king of Syria, many wicked men arose in Israel among the people, who said: "Let us make a covenant with the heathen, and adopt their faith."

Many agreed with them, and left the holy covenant to go to the heathen; and their hearts were hardened, that they wrought all manner of evil.

This pleased the king greatly; and when he returned from Egypt, which he had conquered, and from whence he

brought great booty, he went towards Jerusalem, and entered boldly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar and candlestick and all the golden ornaments, and killed many of the people, and caused blasphemous commands to be proclaimed. Then there was great wailing in Israel, and the pious in the land were full of sorrow and lamented bitterly.

Tidings thereof reached Matathias, the son of John, who had left Jerusalem on account of the sins of the people, and had journeyed toward Modin. And his sons came and told him all that had happened in the holy city; and they said to their father: "How can the God of Israel suffer this?"

Matathias answered and said: "They have forsaken the Lord and his holy covenant,—how should the Lord help the apostates? Let justice punish them, that they may be worthy to receive mercy."

After a time the king sent a captain with chariots and horsemen, who treacherously attacked the city and plundered it; he razed the walls thereof to the ground; carried away women, children, and cattle; then he fortified the castle of David, and manned it with a riotous band, who practised there all kinds of abomination. So the sanctuary was desolate, and the feast-days changed to days of mourning; for the oppression increased daily.

The sons of Matathias told this to their father at Modin, and waited to hear what he would reply.

And Matathias answered and said: "Let them know what they have lost, that they may learn to seek it."

Now Antiochus the king commanded that all people

should adhere to one faith and sacrifice to the idols, and commanded that the people should be led into all kinds of wickedness. And many in Israel consented, and sacrificed to the idols, and broke the Sabbath. Then the sons of Matathias came again to their father and told him.

But he answered and said: "It is the Lord's will that darkness may be separated from light. The Lord knoweth his own."

After some days the sons of Matathias came again to their father, and brought him tidings that the cruel tyrant had slain several righteous men, because they would not depart from the law; and that he had commanded to kill all who should refuse to sacrifice to the idols. And they waited for the reply of their father.

Matathias answered and said: "The Lord's will be done. Blood must flow before the flame is kindled on the altar. Be of good courage and keep to the law, and God will raise you up once more in glory."

After these days, captains of the king came to Modin to Matathias, saying: "Thou art the chief and the mightiest man in this town, and hast many sons and a great kindred. Go, therefore, and do as the king has commanded; so thou and thy sons will find in him a gracious king, and receive much gold and silver and many gifts."

Then Matathias opened his mouth, and said: "And if all should forget the law of our fathers and obey the king's command, I and my brethren and my sons will not fall away."

When he had said this, a Jew went and offered sacrifice to the idols before the eyes of all the people.

Then the heart of Matathias kindled within him, and he ran and smote the Jew and the captain of the king, and threw down the altar. Then he went through the town, and cried aloud: "Whoso will keep the covenant, let him follow me." And many faithful men went with him into the mountains, leaving behind them all they had.

When they were in the wilderness, Matathias said: "Now it is time that *thought* should become *deed*, and the word be exchanged for the sword."

The band of the faithful armed themselves, and the sons of Matathias led them on. But before they went, they turned to their father, and said: "Shall we not first cleanse the sanctuary of the abomination of idols, and set up the altar, according to the word of the law, and then go forth to fight against the strangers?"

Then Matathias answered and said: "Not so! First smite the enemy with the edge of the sword, and release the country from shame and bondage, that the sanctuary may be built on purified ground."

And they did so, and smote the Syrians with great might; and liberated Jerusalem and the country of Judah. Then they purified the sanctuary and the whole land of all strange abominations; and the glory of the Lord appeared in his holy temple.



THE OLD MAN AND THE YOUTH.

GERON, an old man of eighty years, was sitting at the door of his rural dwelling, enjoying the bright autumnal morning. His eye rested by turns on the blue mountains in the distance, from whose summits the mist was ascending like a cloud of incense, and on his sprightly grandchildren, who were playing around him.

Then a youth from town came to the old man, and entered into conversation with him. When he heard the number of his years, he marvelled at his healthy and

vigorous appearance, and asked Geron what he had done to enjoy such strength and serenity in the winter of his life.

Then Geron answered: "My son, this is, like every good thing, a gift from above, of which we must not boast; nevertheless we may do something here below to obtain it."

After these words the old man rose and took the stranger to the orchard; here he showed him the high splendid trees laden with delicious fruit, the sight of which gladdened the heart.

Then the old man said: "Dost thou marvel that I now enjoy the fruit of these trees? Behold, my son, I planted them in my youth. Here thou hast the mystery of my quiet fruitful old age."

The youth bowed his head; for he understood the old man's words, and pondered them in his heart.



THE HERO.

A GREAT war broke out, and the army of the king marched to the distant frontier to besiege the fortresses of the enemy. The king's son and the heir to his throne accompanied the army, to encourage the soldiers by his presence; but the counsellors who were with him dealt deceitfully with the prince, and endeavoured to seduce

him by all kinds of pleasures, that they might govern in his stead.

With this intent they said to him: "It is not fit for the king's son to expose himself to dangers, and to abide with the army like a common soldier; for this purpose he has captains and chiefs. It is enough that he be at hand when necessity requires it. Thus he shall be the more respected."

So they took him into a large town, and made great feasts, and entangled his heart, so that he lived in continual dissipation.

But, behold, tidings of all this came to the ears of a faithful old servant of the royal house, and he arose and went to the son of the king. When he found him, he spoke freely and uprightly, saying: "Hear me! They intend evil towards thee, and seek to weaken and corrupt the son of my lord the king, that they may reign after their own pleasure. Therefore know thyself, and flee the lusts of youth, which war against the spirit,—strengthen thyself!"

Then the voice of truth touched the heart of the royal youth; and he arose and put on his armour, and girding on his sword, went into the camp, and said to the chief leader: "Henceforth I will combat with you, and will be the first to fight and to endure."

Then the old general was deeply touched;—he seized the hand of the youth, and said: "O my lord and prince, he who overcomes himself is greater than he who conquers towns and fortresses."

THE FRUIT-TREE AND ITS ROOT.

POLYDORUS, a heathen youth, had abandoned the crooked path of idolatry, and received with a faithful heart the words of truth. As he condemned the lusts of paganism, and repented of his former life, he retired into a solitary place, and renounced every pleasure of nature and life; for he said: "The flesh striveth against the spirit; therefore I will deaden the strength of the senses, and shut up all the path of temptation."

Then Justus, his master, who had converted him, went to the youth, and took him to a tree planted by a brook, bearing flowers and fruit, and said to him: "Polydorus, observe this tree. The Lord has given it to us for an example, that we may be rich in good fruit."

The youth looked at the tree, and said: "The tree is happy! without temptations and the war against the flesh, it fulfils its destiny in silence, bearing flowers and fruit in its season."

Then the old man smiled, and said: "Would not the tree be more perfect without the low root creeping along in the dark soil, and drinking the slimy nourishment from the brook?"

"But," answered the youth, "it supports the stem of the tree, and provides it with sap to bring forth flowers and fruit."

Then the old man lifted up his voice, and said: "Go

thou and do likewise. Despise not the senses nor their influence, for they are the low root of life; but let them always be low. Form what this root conveys to thee into spiritual flowers and fruit. Like the branches and twigs of the tree, all thy thoughts and doings will then be directed towards heaven, and the light of truth will silently lead thee to perfection."

Thus said the old man Justus; and Polydorus left the wilderness, lived in intercourse with nature and mankind, and taught many by his word and example.



ASAPH AND HEMAN.

ASAPH, one of the holy singers of Sion, was sitting one evening on the roof of his house, looking at the setting sun, and his countenance glowed in its rays.

Then Heman, another of the singers in the sanctuary, came to Asaph, and saluted him. At the same time Heman smiled, and said: "Behold, thy face shines like that of Moses the man of God, when he descended from Sinai. This becometh thee well, Asaph; for thus thy outer form appears like unto thy inner man."

Asaph looked upon his friend, and said: "What meanest thou, Heman?"

And Heman answered and said: "Art thou not always calm and cheerful, and thy countenance is ever bright and unclouded like the face of heaven, though thou hast suffered much tribulation? Teach me this art, Asaph."

Then Asaph replied: "Behold, Heman, I have a friend whom my soul loveth; though he seemeth far from me, yet he is always nigh, and filleth my soul. I impart to him every thought and every feeling of my heart. I recognise him in the morning dawn, and the evening light; nay, I see him in every flower of the field, and feel his breath in the sighing of the wind."

"But," said Heman, "when affliction and tribulation come?"

And Asaph answered and said: "O Heman, I hold fast to my friend; he is my comfort, and his love lifts up my soul. Seest thou how the sun gilds the edges of yonder dark cloud?"



ATTALUS AND MENO.

IN the region of Antioch, in Syria, lived two families, who had been from ancient times at bitter enmity, which had been handed down from father to son. The fathers of the two houses, Attalus and Meno, did to each other whatever harm they could; and their animosity increased every day.

Now Meno had a slave who was a follower of the Lord, and walked worthily according to the Gospel, being faithful in all things, so that Meno loved him, and set him over his household. And God was with Silas—this was the slave's name—in all that he did, and blessed the house of his master for his sake. Therefore Meno often conversed



with his steward; and Silas gained his heart, so that he believed, and was baptised in the name of the Lord.

From this time Meno became a new man, and no longer spoke evil of Attalus his enemy, though Attalus hated and persecuted him more than ever, and grieved him daily.

Attalus was more and more exasperated by Meno's meekness, and he bribed wicked men to devastate Meno's garden in the night, and to destroy his finest trees, which he had planted himself, and which he prized exceedingly.

Then Meno's friends came and said: "If thou dost not revenge this, he will compass more evil against thee."

But Meno answered and said: "The mischief has been done by night, and he will deny it. To me it is an exercise of patience. Formerly the same spirit filled me."

Soon afterwards his friends brought to him two of the evil-doers, whom Attalus had hired to devastate the garden, and his friends said: "These two have confessed the crime; now thou mayest punish him."

But Meno answered: "I have forgiven him, and will not suffer hatred to enter into my heart, though I am grieved for the trees." Then Meno's friends were angry with him.

Soon after, the house of Attalus was burning fiercely. Meno hastened to his help with all his servants, and rescued two of his enemy's children from the flames. Then he went to Attalus, extended his hand to him, and said: "Oh, let there be enmity no longer between thy house and mine." And Meno offered his assistance to build a new house.

But Attalus turned away from him with anger in his

heart, and said: "The fire is of Meno's kindling!" and many believed his words.

Thereat the heart of Meno was exceedingly sorrowful; and his friends said: "Let the villain go, and deliver him to Satan!"

But Meno said: "He is a man, and bears a torn human heart in his bosom. I will not curse him."

After some time, Attalus lost all his wealth, and was reduced to great poverty, suffering want with his wife and children; and Attalus himself fell sick of grief and misery.

Then Meno took heart, and went once more to him, and said: "O Attalus, let there be no more discord between me and thee, but let us grasp each other's hands before they grow cold. Behold, what I have shall be thine. Let us walk together like brethren."

When Attalus heard these words, he looked at Meno with his hollow eyes, and his countenance changed, and he turned away. His wife and children wept, and Meno likewise.

Then Meno's friends derided him, and said: "Thou hast now exhausted thy kindness on the unworthy man; what wilt thou do more for him?"

Meno answered: "There is nothing left to me but to pray for him." And Meno ministered to Attalus and his family in secret, so that they did not suffer want.

After these days the sickness of Attalus increased, and he died. When Meno heard this, he wept for him, and followed him to the grave, and became the comforter of Attalus' widow and the orphans.

And the people said: "How is it possible that a man can do this?" For they knew not the spirit that dwelt in him.

THE MAGNETIC NEEDLE.

A SOCIETY of learned men caused a ship to be built, and resolved to make a voyage to discover the wonderful nature and properties of the magnetic needle. When the ship was ready to sail, they went on board, taking with them a great number of books and all kinds of instruments; then they set a magnetic needle in the midst, and examined and observed it. Thus they sailed to and fro, looking at the needle, and each had his own opinion concerning the hidden power which moves the needle.

Some called this secret power a stream, others a breath, others, again, a spirit; some asserted that it moved from the south to the north, others said from the north to the south. So a violent contest arose among the learned men, and they sailed to and fro on the ocean, quarrelling with each other.

Suddenly they felt a rude shock, and a violent crash was heard. The ship had struck on a rock and split, and the waves were rushing impetuously in. Then the learned men were all seized with great terror and confusion; they left the needle, jumped overboard, and saved themselves on the rocks. The ship was buried in the waves.

Now, as they sat on the barren rocks, wet through with salt water, they cried out to one another that there was no dependence to be placed in the magnetic needle!



PLACIDUS.

A pious man, named Placidus, went out to Africa, to the land of the wild Namaquas, to preach the word of the Lord. When he was one day in the field in the midst of the people, teaching the word of God the heavenly Father, behold, there came a monster out of the sand, a black, venomous viper, and coiled itself round his feet.

When the Namaquas saw this, they were extremely frightened, for they thought the serpent would kill Placidus, and they dared not attack it for fear of exciting its fury.

But Placidus stood calmly, folded his hands, and looked up to heaven. Now the monster coiled itself round his knees and his body.

The people were more and more terrified, and held their breath for fear. But Placidus remained calmly looking up to heaven.

Now the viper twined itself round the neck and throat of the pious man, and extended its head over his head, with eyes sparkling like two rubies, and with its tongue hissing from the opened jaws like a flame of fire. But Placidus stood calmly looking up to heaven.

The people thought in their heart: "Now his hour is come; who is able to save him?" But the serpent did him no harm; it uncoiled itself slowly from his body to the ground, and slipped back into its hole.

Then the multitude marvelled, and would have worshipped Placidus. But he prevented them, and said: "Worship Him in whom I trust, and whose work I do. Has not He who called me made the serpent also? Is it a great thing that He can rescue me from death?"



SELKA.

SELKA, the daughter of the Cherusk prince, stood alone, in her maiden beauty, on a crag of the old Hartz mountains, looking thoughtfully down on the rock-bound valley below. The joyful shouts of the people and the name of

"Selka" rang in the distance; for the nation celebrated her natal day.

But Selka stood grave and silent, leaning against an oak-tree, thinking of the sacred vow by which she had recently joined the Christian church, and her mind was engaged in sad and profound meditations.

Autumn had stripped the forest of its foliage, faded leaves covered the rocky paths, and the autumnal wind whistled through the ravines.

Then Selka said: "Is not the course of human life like the paths through this rock-bound valley, and the glory of man like the flower of the grass? The grass is withered, the flower has faded."

As she spoke, a gentle breeze arose, whispering among the trees; a stream of light parted the clouds over the forest; and Selka heard a voice in the breeze, which said: "The word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Joyfully she turned towards the valley, and in the depths of the steep and rugged path she perceived two forms like pilgrims, one of celestial, the other of terrestrial appearance, walking like brothers. Vigorously, as a youth, the foremost apparition came on, bearing a cross instead of a staff in its left hand, while its right pointed upwards. With joyful confidence the second followed to the top of the rock.

Here a third form stood, surrounded by heavenly brightness; in its hands was grasped a crown of thorns, from which heavenly flowers were blooming. These it scattered on the toiling pilgrims; and as they ascended higher, the rugged rocks became more and more smooth before them.

Then Selka cried: "Who are these heavenly beings, before whom the darksome valley grows light, and the rocks are smoothed?"

And she received for answer: "These are they to whom thou hast given thy heart, Selka, — Faith, Hope, and Charity."

Then the vision vanished, and a dense mist veiled the valley. Selka exclaimed: "O leave to me, ye heavenly beings, a token of your appearance!"

Behold, the mist was dispersed, and a limpid stream flowed through the silent valley. The face of heaven is reflected in his waves, and the rough rocks whose fragments cannot check his course.

"O thou image of changing life, my name shall also be thine!" said Selka, the daughter of the prince; and she returned joyfully to the halls of her father.



MOUNT LEBANON.

SIMEON, a teacher in Israel, walked in the ways of the godly, so that those of the land said: "Simple and upright, like Simeon." But they praised still higher his humility; for his soul was like that of a child, full of innocence and simplicity.

One day, when his friends and disciples were highly commending his holy life, and asserting that no fault could be found in him, Simeon was vexed with their praises, and

said: "None is good but One; how can you call me good?"

Then they all marvelled, and were silent; but one of them lifted up his voice, saying: "When a man has walked all his days uprightly before the Lord, why should he not rejoice in it, like one who has reached the height, after having surmounted the difficulties of the steep path?"

Then Simeon answered and said: "I will tell you a tale of the days of my youth." All listened; and the old man spoke as follows: "From the house of my father is seen, in the distance, Mount Lebanon, and the cedars on the summit. I often heard my father and his friends talk of the height of the mountain, and the magnificence of the cedar-forest on its crown.

"I could not comprehend this praise. I took a piece of paper, and drew Lebanon with the cedars, and gave it to my father, saying: 'Behold, my father, here is Mount Lebanon, with the cedars on its summit. How can you praise it so greatly?—it seems like a hill, and the trees like bushes on the hill.'

"My father was silent, smiled, and preserved the paper.

"Soon afterwards my father said: 'Take thy staff, Simeon; we will go to Mount Lebanon.' And we journeyed for several days. The nearer we approached, the higher appeared the mountain. At last we set out one night, and reached the mountain; and when the mists were dispersed and the day broke, I beheld the height of it, and the trees of the Lord on its summit. Then I marvelled, and was afraid.

"But my father took out the paper, and said to me:

‘Now compare thy picture with the size of Lebanon and the cedars.’

“Then I was put to confusion, and my face glowed with shame.”

After these words the old man rose, and said, with a bright smile: “Now, also, I have wandered many days, and have approached nearer to the glory of the Lord.”

Then he was silent; and his disciples and friends were speechless also, and questioned Simeon no more concerning his humility.



SELF-EXAMINATION.

A PIOUS father had an unruly son, who, refusing all exhortations, spent his days in the company of bad men, and indulged in every sensual pleasure. Thus his heart became more and more corrupt, and every virtue was deadened within him. The father mourned in silence for the perversity of the youth.

After some time the father fell dangerously ill, and when he felt death approaching, he sent for his son. When the son appeared by the bed-side of his father, the latter said to him: “Fear not, my son, that I shall reproach thee with thy way of life. Behold, I shall die, and thou shalt be heir to my possessions. But fulfil the last wish which I shall address to thee. It is easy to accomplish it; therefore

I trust thou wilt promise to fulfil it, and wilt keep thy word."

The son answered, that he would do so, if it lay in his power.

Then the dying father said: "Promise me, my son, that for the space of two months thou wilt come every night into this chamber, and devote one-half hour to solitude and reflection."

The son promised faithfully to do so, and gave his father his hand upon it; his father blessed him, and died, and was buried. The son returned to his companions, and lived merrily and thoughtlessly as before.

But when the night came, he remembered his vow, and the image of his dying father admonished him to keep it. At first it was very troublesome to him to be alone, it seemed so dreary and silent, and fear fell upon him. But he overcame this feeling on account of his pledged word, thinking: "Two months will pass quickly."

But, behold, now his eyes were opened concerning his life; his heart accused him, and the fear of the Lord entered into his soul; he communed with himself, and wept, and became henceforth another man.

THE COWHERD.

A BOY was tending a cow on a pasture near a garden. He happened to look up at a cherry-tree, and perceived some ripe cherries, which shone bright and red, and he was tempted to pick them. So he left the cow, and climbed the tree.

But when the cow no longer saw her keeper, she went into the garden, eating flowers and herbs to her heart's content, while she trod the rest under foot.

When the boy perceived it, he was very angry, jumped from the tree to the ground, ran and seized the cow, and beat and abused her unmercifully.

The father, who had observed all that had happened, now came up to the boy, looked sternly at him, and said: "Who deserves the punishment, thou or the animal, which cannot discern between right and left? Hast thou yielded less to temptation than the animal, which thou shouldst watch and keep? And now, thou that art possessed of reason, dost exercise such unmerciful judgment, forgetting thy own transgression."

Then the boy was ashamed, and blushed before his father.



OLD AGE.

SIEGFRIED, a countryman of ninety winters, sat in his arm-chair, and saw not the light of day, for he was blind. But he was patient, and thought in his heart: "The day of my deliverance will soon appear." It was then the time of spring.

His grandson, Herman, came from the field, and began to speak cheerfully to the old man of the promising year, and the hope of a rich harvest. Now the old man asked: "Have the trees put forth leaves?"

The youth was surprised, and said: "Long ago, dear grandfather; it was but yesterday that I brought you a spray of flowers, and a rose."

Then Siegfried smiled, and said: "Yes, my dear son, *to-day* and *yesterday* are no more for me. The flowers, too, have lost their fragrance for me." Then he asked again: "Do the larks and nightingales sing?" And the youth stooped down to him, for his ear was dull, and said: "Yes, dear grandfather; shall I lead you into the garden?"

The old man smiled again, and said: "If, indeed, you could lend me your hearing at the same time. But now, what would it profit me if you were to take me there?" Then he said: "You may go out again, Herman; but send little Gertrude here, that some one may be with me in the dark chamber."

Then the youth said, with a voice of sorrow: "Alas, dearest grandfather, she is not at home!"

"Where is the dear child, then?" asked the old man; and the youth answered, sobbing: "She was buried three months ago."

Then the old man smiled and wept at once, and said: "Oh, then she is indeed at home, and it is time that I should follow her."

When the mother of the family, the old man's daughter, who had entered the chamber in the meantime, heard this, she fell on her blind father's neck, and her tears flowed, and Herman wept too, and took the hand of the old man.

Then he lifted up his voice and said: "Mourn not, dear children, and let it not trouble you that time and the world have vanished from me, and that I am become a

child again, and standing on the threshold of eternity, and my face is turned towards home. The fashion of earthly things and this pilgrim's path have vanished from my sight. Yonder I shall see once more, and with purer eyes.'



THE ORACLE.

STREPHON, a Greek youth of high rank, said one day to his tutor: "I would gladly go to Delphi to question the oracle concerning my fate. It seems to me as though I could then arrange my life better, and choose the way of wisdom with more certainty."

"If thou thinkest thus," answered the master, "I will accompany thee."

They set out on their journey, and came to Delphi. With peculiar sensations of awe the youth entered the dreary environs of the sanctuary. They reached the temple, and sat down opposite. Then Strephon read this inscription over the entrance of the temple: *Know thyself*. "What do these words mean?" asked he.

His master answered: "They are easy to explain. Think who thou art, and to what end thou didst receive life. We must first know ourselves, before we dare to question our futurity."

"Who am I, then?" asked the youth.

"Thou art Strephon," answered his tutor, "the son of

the worthy Agathias. But if death were to take thee suddenly, as a little while ago it snatched thy brother Callias, could I then say to thy lifeless corpse or thy ashes: 'My dear Strephon?' Behold, the being which thinks in thee, and which will soon know its futurity from the mouth of the priest—that is **THYSELF**. This invisible being is destined to guide all thy actions, to regulate thy life, and to form it into a well-defined whole. By this means thou wilt become like unto the gods, and content with thyself. For the man whom the spirit governs may be compared to a well-tuned lyre, which emits nothing but lovely sounds; but the man who is governed by sensuality and passion, is a slave, and his low inclinations lead him whither they please on ungodly ways. Whosoever fully acknowledges this his destiny, and by questioning himself discovers how far he has approached the goal in the way he has chosen, or how far he is yet distant,—that man knows himself."

The youth was silent. Then the master said: "Come, let us now enter the temple."

But Strephon said: "No, my beloved master, the inscription is enough for me; I am ashamed of my foolish desire; I have too much to do with myself and with the present to trouble myself with the future."

"Happy art thou," said his tutor; "do not repent having undertaken the journey; it has answered its purpose, for thou hast heard the voice of the gods. Thou art on the road to wisdom; thy humility proves it, for this is the first fruit of self-knowledge."

ALFRED; OR, THE TWISTED TREE.

THERE dwelt in olden times on the banks of the Ruhr a rude and savage people. They worshipped cruel idols, and lived like the beasts of the field. Their country was a wilderness, full of foul marshes, and covered with dense impenetrable thickets and noisome weeds. Nought but the combats of the wild beasts or the savage men broke the dreary silence of the desolate land.

There came a man from a far country ; and he stood on a mountain, and looked down on the land, and his heart yearned with compassion at the wretched sight. He was a man of a noble mind, like the apostles, on whom rested the spirit of the Lord. And his name was called Alfred ; for he said : “ I would gladly bring the peace of God to all the world.”

Now he came to the savage inhabitants of the land, and they received him with confidence and respect, for his aspect was grave and kind, and the spirit of the Lord was with him.

He taught them to root up the bushes, to drain the marshes, and to till the land. He gave them corn to sow, and planted fruit-trees. Thus Alfred renewed the face of the land, and changed the wilderness into a lovely blooming garden.

One day, when the people were assembled round Alfred on the height, they all marvelled at the beauty of the land, and its order and lovely aspect ; and they rejoiced, and were going to worship Alfred, saying : “ Thou art thyself

the god whom thou preacheest. Thou art come down to us from heaven. What profit is there in the dumb idols?"

Then Alfred smiled, and said: "You may indeed rejoice in the beauty of the land, but the enjoyment of the good and beautiful must lead you to the knowledge of truth."

And Alfred spoke to them of the everlasting love of the Father in heaven, and of Jesus Christ the Lord and Saviour, and of eternal life. Thus he taught every one; and all who heard him received the word and forsook their idols, and believed in the truth.

After some time they came again to Alfred, and said: "Thou hast given us the highest and the best; how can we show our gratitude to thee?"

Then Alfred said: "Give thanks to the Father, who sent me to you. Even as your land, cultivated by your industry, gratefully yields flowers and fruits, so you must become a field of God, bringing forth fruits of faith, hope, and charity. If you do this, you will partake more and more of that peace which I have announced to you, and the hour of your death will be as the evening of a spring day."

After these words Alfred fell asleep, and the countenance of the dead man was calm and placid.

The inhabitants of the land wept for Alfred as for their father, and buried him on the height from whence he had first seen the land. And they planted a tree on his grave, a lime-tree, and under it a cross to his memory.

From thence it is called *the twisted tree* to this day. He who has a pious heart, easily sees in it the image of the elevated heavenly mind, which glorifies even terrestrial things.



THE GUIDE.

A WANDERER had to go a long and dangerous journey over a rugged and rocky mountain, and knew not the way. He asked a traveller for information, of whom he heard that he had come this same path. The traveller pointed out the road to him clearly and distinctly, together with all the by-ways and precipices of which he must beware, and the rocks which he should climb ; moreover, he gave him a leaf of paper, on which all these things were described skilfully and exactly.

The wanderer observed all this attentively, and at each turn and by-path he considered carefully the instructions and description of his friend. Vigorously he proceeded; but the more he advanced, the steeper the rocks appeared, and the way seemed to lose itself in the lonely dreary ravines.

Then his courage failed him; anxiously he looked up to the towering gray rocks, and cried: "It is impossible for man to ascend so steep a path, and to climb these rugged rocks. The wings of eagles and the feet of the mountain-goat alone can do it."

He turned away, thinking to return by the way he had come, when suddenly he heard a voice exclaiming: "Take courage, and follow me!" He looked round, and to his joyful surprise he beheld the man who had pointed out the way to him. He saw him walk calmly and steadily between the ravines and precipices, and the rushing mountain-torrents. This inspired him with new confidence, and he followed vigorously. Before night-fall they had ascended the mountain, and a lovely valley, where blossomed myrtle and pomegranate trees, received them at the end of their pilgrimage.

Then the cheerful wanderer thanked his friend, and said: "How can I express my gratitude to thee? Thou hast not only guided me on the right way, but hast also given me strength and courage to persevere."

The other answered: "Not so; am I not a wanderer like thyself, and art thou not the same man as before? Thou hast only seen by my example what thou art, and what thou art able to do."

THE WOOD-GATHERING.

Two boys, the sons of poor parents, went one day in autumn to the forest, to collect dry sticks. One of them, the son of a kind widow, was called Erhard; the other, named Matthew, had a hard stepmother, who often lived in discord with his father.

When the boys reached the forest, they resolved to return home together, and then parted to look for dry sticks. Erhard collected busily, and where he saw a dry branch on a tree he climbed up and broke it off. In a short time he had prepared a heavy bundle and tied it up tightly.

Then he ran to the other side, calling his companion, who answered him from the depth of the wood; and when Erhard joined him, he found him among the hazel-bushes. When Erhard saw him, he said: "Let us go home now. Where is your faggot?" But Matthew answered: "Have you finished so quickly? I have not yet found any thing."

Then Erhard wondered; but when he heard that his companion had been all the time looking for nuts, he said: "I will help you to collect wood; my mother is waiting for me; make haste, or we cannot go together."

Then Matthew took out a knife, and looked about to see if any one was near. Erhard asked him: "What are you about?"

The other answered: "Pick up some dry sticks to put outside the faggot, I will provide for the rest." Then he prepared to cut down a young oak with his knife.

Erhard was terrified, and cried: "God forbid that you should hurt the young tree. It would be a shame and a sin. If the forest-keeper were to hear of it, he would forbid every one to pick up wood, and you would be the cause if all the poor people were to go without wood during the severe winter. God forbid that we should do such evil. Wait a little, I will find a way."

Erhard looked round, and discovered an old oak with many dead branches; he climbed up the tree like a squirrel, and threw down the dry wood. Matthew was surprised.

In less than half an hour they had wood enough, and Erhard made a bundle and carried it to the place where he had left his own; then he put it down, and said to Matthew: "Now take it on your shoulder."

But Matthew said: "Let me rather have the other,—it is smaller and lighter."

Erhard laughed, and said: "You are stronger and taller than I am; but let it be as you will."

They took their bundles and went. Matthew panted and complained; and before they were out of the forest, he asked Erhard to stop, that they might rest, as he was tired. And wherever he found a nut-bush, he wanted to stop to look for nuts. But Erhard prevented him, and said: "I must go to my mother."

When they had walked a little while on the road, Matthew threw his bundle angrily to the ground, and said: "You have made it too heavy." He pulled out some thick pieces, saying: "Let him take these who pleases!"

But Erhard picked them up and put them with his own

"I will carry them for you," said he, "till we reach the town."

Then Matthew was astonished at the kindness and strength of his companion; and he looked at him, and said: "Who teaches you to do this, and what gives you so much strength?"

Erhard answered: "My mother's love!" But Matthew sighed and groaned.

JONATHAN AND DAVID.

NATHAN and Gad, the prophets of the Lord, lived at the time of Saul the king of Israel, and both were grieved because of Saul and the evil spirit of discord which was come upon him. But the men of God were well pleased with Jonathan, the king's son. For they thought: "The spirit of love dwells in him, and he will comfort his people in his season."

They observed the youth and were attentive to his ways; but chiefly they marked his love and friendship for David the son of Jesse. For love, they thought, is the perfection of man. Thereby we must learn to know the youth's heart and character.

And when the two young men walked together, rejoicing in their youth, or inclining their hearts to sacred music and wisdom, the men of God were nigh to them, though the youths knew it not.

Then the king was wroth with David, and condemned him, and swore to kill him. David was compelled to fly for his life, and he fled towards Ramah. Then the prophets

said : " Will Jonathan be faithful, and not forsake him in his misfortune ? " And they followed Jonathan when he went out to meet David. And when Jonathan saw David at a distance, he ran and fell on his neck, and they wept together ; and Jonathan comforted his friend David.

The prophets rejoiced at it, and said : " Jonathan is a good youth, he forgets not his friend in his misfortune, but confirms the union of their hearts. His tears bear him witness."

After these days, Gad said to Nathan : " Behold, Jonathan will be put to a severe test. Samuel has anointed David king and chief in Israel."

Then Nathan was serious and sorrowful in his soul, and said : " I would this were taken from me ; but the spirit of the Lord commands that he be proved."

And the men of God went to Jonathan, and accompanied him on his way to David in the wilderness of Siph. And when they were in the wilderness, near the cave on mount Hachilah, the prophet Gad said to Jonathan, the son of king Saul : " Behold, Samuel has anointed David king over Israel."

When Jonathan heard this he rose hastily, and fell on David's neck, and wept for joy, and cried : " Thou wilt live, and wilt be king over Israel !"

When the men saw this they rejoiced, and Nathan said : These tears of joy are more precious than the first. It is more to rejoice with the joyful, than to weep with the sorrowful."

And the prophets blessed Jonathan ; but it was hidden from them that Jonathan should fall by the side of his father on the mountains of Gilboa.



THE REPRESENTATIVES.

A RICH youth in Rome was suffering from a dangerous illness; at length he recovered, and regained his health. Then he went for the first time into the garden, feeling, as it were, born again; and he was full of joy, and praised God with a loud voice. He turned his face to heaven, and said: "O thou all-sufficient Creator, could man recompense thee, how willingly would I give thee all my possessions!"

Hernas, who was called the herdman, heard this, and

said to the rich youth : " All good gifts come from above ; thither thou canst send nothing. Come, follow me."

The youth followed the pious old man, who took him to a dark hut, where was nothing but misery and wretchedness. The father was stretched on a bed of sickness, the mother wept, the children were destitute of clothing, and crying for bread.

The youth was deeply touched. Hermas said : " See here an altar for thy sacrifice. See here the Lord's brethren and representatives."

Then the rich youth assisted them bountifully, and provided for the sick man's wants. And the poor people blessed him, and called him an angel of God.

Hermas smiled, and said : " Thus turn always thy grateful countenance first to heaven, and then to earth."

ADAM AND THE CHERUB.

ADAM had tilled the ground, and made himself a garden full of plants and trees. The ears of his corn waved in the bright rays of the evening sun, and the trees were covered with flowers and fruits. The father of the human race, and his wife and children, rested on a hill, and beheld the glory of the field, and of the setting sun.

Then the cherub, the watcher of Eden, came to them without his flaming sword, and his countenance was kind.

He saluted them, and said : " Behold, no more do fruits

grow of themselves for you; you must labour to eat bread in the sweat of your brow. But after the labour you rejoice in the fruit acquired by your own toil, and the full corn-ears are pleasant to your eyes. The merciful Jehovah has given you the means of creating for yourselves an Eden."

"His goodness is great even when he chasteneth," said Adam. "We will labour willingly in the sweat of our brow. But formerly Jehovah was nearer to us, and blessed us, and lifted up the light of his countenance on us. What have we to atone for this?"

"Prayer," answered the cherub. "Toil is the earthly—prayer the heavenly gift of Jehovah."

And Adam lifted up his face, with his wife and children, and he gave thanks, and prayed. Then his eye was clearer, and his face shone, and he said: "The Lord is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever."

THE TEACHING OF NATURE.

Among the disciples of Hillel, the wise teacher of the sons of Israel, was one named Saboth, to whom every work was a great trouble, and who gave himself up to idleness and sloth. Hillel was grieved thereat for the youth, and resolved to cure him of his fault.

To this end he took him out to the valley of Hinnom, by Jerusalem. There was a standing pool full of snakes and vermin, and covered with muddy weeds.

When they reached this place, Hillel put down his staff, and said: "Let us rest here from our way."

The youth was surprised, and said: "How, master, near this foul bog? Dost thou not perceive what poisonous vapours it exhales?"

"Thou art right, my son," answered the master; "this bog is like the soul of a slothful man. Who would wish to be near it?"

Then Hillel took the youth to a waste field, producing nothing but thistles and thorns, which choked the corn and the salutary herbs. Now Hillel leaned on his staff, and said: "Behold, this field has good soil to produce all that is useful and pleasant. But it is forgotten and neglected. Therefore it brings forth thistles and thorns, and poisonous weeds, beneath which lurk toads and serpents. A little while ago thou didst see the soul; now behold the life of an idle man."

Then Saboth was full of shame and repentance, and said: "Master, why leadest thou me to these lonely and dreary spots? They are the reproachful picture of my soul and life."

Hillel answered and said: "Thou wouldst not believe my words; therefore I tried whether the voice of nature would penetrate to thy heart."

Saboth pressed his master's hand, and said: "Thy endeavours shall not be in vain; thou wilt see that a new life has begun within me."

And after this day, Saboth became an active youth. Then Hillel took him into a fertile valley, by the side of a



clear brook, which flowed meandering between fruitful trees, flowery meadows, and shady shrubberies.

"See here," said the old man to the rejoicing youth, "the picture of thy new, industrious life. Nature, which warned thee, will now reward thee. Her beauty and grace can only give joy to him who sees in her life a picture of his own."



THE DREAM OF URI.

At the time of the captivity, there dwelt by the waters of Babylon a man of Israel, whose name was Uri; he had a wife and children, and lived simply and honestly; but a spirit of melancholy and discontent had come upon him. For he murmured against the Lord, that he had forsaken his people, and said: "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what does it profit us to call upon him?" Uri also doubted in the promises by which the Lord comforted the captives by the mouths of the prophets, and said: "Who can save our remnant from the hand of the mighty? It is not possible." Thus Uri did evil, and grieved all those who believed in the Lord, and looked for the redemption of Israel. But the Lord had patience with Uri, according to his great mercy.

Now, when Uri had clamoured and lamented one day, because of the tribulations in the strange country, the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and Uri dreamed, and saw a vision.

It seemed to him as if he had left Babylon with his wife and children, and returned to his home in the mountains by Bethlehem. There he had built a hut under the shade of the palm and olive trees, his sheep were browsing the pastures round about, and the field was covered with rustling ears of corn. And his heart was full of joy, and he said to his wife and his children: "Let us be glad and of good cheer, for all our troubles have now an end."

But, behold, suddenly the sun was darkened, and it became as in the night; the thunder rolled in the heavens, and the earth quaked, so that the beams of their dwelling trembled, and the hut shook. Hastily Uri took his wife and children, and fled into the field. Scarcely had they arrived there, when their house fell with a great crash, and the field shook under their feet, as if the earth were going to open to swallow them. Trembling and terrified, he left the dangerous spot, and fled by the glare of the lightning with his wife and children to a rocky hill close by. But, alas, a new misfortune. One of the children, the youngest, was not with them. The father was about to descend to seek for the child; then the earthquake began again, more terrible than before. The ground opened before his eyes, and oh, horror! the rock under their feet reeled, and hung crashing over the chasm. Uri's wife and children screamed aloud. He covered his head, and said: "Who can help us, and save us from this death?" He said it, and awoke. And behold, his wife slept by his side, and the children slumbered round about him; he was still in the land of Babylon. "The Lord be praised," said he; "it was but a dream."

But the angel of the Lord stood at the foot of his bed, and said: "This dream came from God. I touched thy forehead, and when thou didst awake, thy troubles ended. Uri, fear not, but believe."

And Uri humbled himself before the Lord, and said: "I have looked for grapes on thorns." And he believed, comforted his people, and strengthened the brethren. And after these days Cyrus published a decree, that the Israelites should return to their own land.

THE WORD IN THE HEART.

WHEN the patriarch Abraham was old and well stricken in years, and the hour came that he should die, he assembled all his children and grandchildren and blessed them. Then Isaac his son, and Rebekah his son's wife, asked him, and said: "My father, thou hast been a pilgrim all the days of thy life, from Chaldea to Haran, and from Haran to Canaan, and from Canaan to Mizraim, and from Mizraim to Canaan, as a stranger in the Land of Promise, and in manifold tribulations and sorrows. Tell us, my father, what has strengthened and guided thee on thy pilgrimage."

Then Abraham answered and said: "The word of the Lord in my heart."

"And what is this word?" asked his children.

Abraham said: "The word which he spoke to me in the grove at Mamre: 'I am the Lord Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' It was to me a stronghold

in the day of need, a light on the dark way, and a shield and defence in the time of danger. And now it goeth before me on my last way, showing me from afar that well-established home, the builder and creator whereof is the Lord."

Then the children of Abraham said; "I am the Lord Almighty! Who shall receive it so cheerfully" . . .

Abraham answered and said: "Only they who have seen the day of the Lord, and know his love."

And when he had said these words, he bowed his head on the pillow and died.



THE HUSBANDRY OF GOD.

OTHO, an agriculturist, said one day to his neighbour Gotthold: "For many years I have observed thy works and ways; but one thing seems to me most precious, and yet most strange. Though thy fate has often changed, and though many tribulations and afflictions have come upon thee and thy house, yet are thy countenance, thy words, and thy ways always serene and calm, in the evil days as in the good. Teach me how thou dost accomplish this."

Then Gotthold answered: "That may be explained in a few words. My own calling and my daily labour teach me. I have learned to look upon myself and my life as upon a field."



At these words Otho looked at him as though he did not comprehend him, and Gotthold continued: "Behold, my brother; when affliction comes, I think of the plough and the harrow, which dig up the soil, that the weeds may die, and that the seed may take root. Then I search for the barren spot in my soul, and the weeds that may grow in me. These must be destroyed, and that must be cultivated, if any fruit is to grow and prosper. Sometimes I look upon my tribulation as upon a thunder-cloud, which comes on dark and menacing, but afterwards brings rain and cools the air; and I think: When it is past, the sun will shine again. Behold, thus I look upon myself and my life as a field. And shall the field say to the husbandman: 'What doest thou?'"

Then said the other: "Thou tellest me of the fruit instead of the root. Tell me, how hast thou attained unto these thoughts and feelings?"

And Gotthold answered and said: "From whence can spiritual gifts come, but from Him who sendeth down rain and sunshine on our fields, and bringeth forth bread from the earth? Behold, we are his field!"

THE ASTRONOMER AND HIS CHILD.

AN astronomer, a very learned man, had passed the whole night on the observatory, watching the course of the stars. In the morning he entered the common room of

his house, to salute his wife; he carried a roll under his arm, and his eyes beamed with inward joy, and with the consciousness of merit.

"See here," said he, unfolding the roll, which was covered with a vast number of signs and figures,—“here are the fruits of a rich and glorious night. What a science is this, which is able to point out the course of the numberless stars of heaven, from which they may not turn aside to the right or to the left, and which can measure the height of the lunar mountains! And what a feeling is it, to be master of such a science!”

While he was speaking thus, to the great admiration of his wife, his little son took his hand, interrupted his speech, and cried: “Father, father!” But he checked the child, and said: “Be quiet, my son.”

However, the child did not cease, but pulled his father's coat, and cried: “Look here, papa.” Then the father looked round; and the little boy pointed to the time-piece, and said: “I know all the figures on the dial, and now the hand is pointing to seven.” With these words the child nodded his head very sagely, and looked at his father.

The mother smiled, and the father also; then he folded up the roll, saying: “Verily, the boy is my master.”

THE GRAIN OF SEED.

Two wanderers travelled together through a certain country. As they were resting one day at an inn, they suddenly heard the tolling of bells, and a cry of "Fire!" in the village. One of the travellers rose hastily, threw down his staff and bundle, and was going to offer his assistance. But the other detained him, saying: "Why should we tarry here? Are there not hands enough to help? What have we to do with strangers?"

The other took no notice of him, but ran to the burning house; then his companion followed slowly, looking on at a distance.

In front of the burning house stood a woman, stupefied with terror, and crying: "My children! my children!"

When the stranger heard this, he rushed into the burning house, with the beams and rafters crashing, and the flames hissing around him. The people exclaimed: "He is lost!"

But when they had waited a little while, behold, he came forth, his hair and clothes singed, carrying two children in his arms, and he took them to their mother. She clasped the children to her bosom, and fell at the stranger's feet. He raised her, and comforted her; in the meantime the house fell.

When the stranger and his companion returned to

the inn, the latter said: "Who bade thee undertake such a daring enterprise?"

The other answered and said: "He who bids me put the grain of seed into the earth, that it may die and bring forth new fruit."

"But how," said the other, "if the burning house had buried thee?"

Then his companion smiled, and said: "Then I myself should have been the seed."



THE VOICE OF JUDGMENT.

A RICH man, called Chryses, ordered his servants to drive out a poor widow and her children from one of his houses, because she was not able to pay the annual rent. When the servants came, the woman said: "Alas, delay a little; perhaps your master will have compassion upon me; I will go and entreat him."

Now the widow went to the rich man with four of her children, for the fifth was very sick, and all entreated him fervently not to drive them away.

But Chryses answered: "I cannot alter my orders, unless, indeed, you pay your debt immediately."

The mother wept bitterly, and said: "Alas, the illness of my child has cost me all my savings, and hindered me



from working." The children implored him again not to turn them out of the house.

But Chryses turned his back upon them, went into his summer-house, and lay down on a couch to rest, as he was wont to do. The day was very sultry; but close by the summer-house flowed a river, spreading refreshing coolness, and it was so calm that every breeze was hushed.

Now Chryses heard the reeds rustling which grew by the river-side; but it sounded to him like the wailing voices of the children of the poor widow, and he began to feel disquieted on his couch.

Then he listened to the rushing of the river; and it was to him as if he were lying on the shore of an immense ocean; and he threw himself restlessly about on his cushions.

When he listened again, he heard at a distance the thunder of an approaching tempest: now it was to him as if he heard the voice of judgment.

Suddenly he rose, hastened home, and ordered his servants to open the house to the poor widow. But she was gone with her children into the forest, and was nowhere to be found. In the meantime the tempest increased; the thunder roared, and a heavy rain fell. Chryses walked to and fro in disquietude and trouble.

The following day he heard that the sick child had died in the forest, and that the mother had wandered away with the others.

Then he had no more pleasure in his garden, his summer-house, or his couch, and the cooling air of the rushing river gladdened him no longer.

Soon after Chryses fell sick; and in the heat of the fever he heard incessantly the rustling of the reeds, the murmur of the waves, and the roar of the approaching tempest. Thus he died.



THE LEPROSY.

JUDAH, a prophet of the Lord, one day visited Eli, the judge and high priest in Israel, purposing to abide with him some days.

But on the day after his arrival, the prophet came very sorrowfully to Eli, with his staff in his hand, and said: "I can stay no longer; I must bless thee and go."

These words grieved Eli, and he said: "God forbid that thou shouldst take my joy from me, and leave me in my sorrow. What drives thee away?"

Then Judah opened his mouth and said: "Alas, Eli, the misery of thy house and the leprosy of thy sons cause me great sorrow."

Eli was terrified, and said: "How should my sons be lepers without my knowledge?"

But Judah answered and said: "I speak not of the leprosy of the body, but of a worse. They deride their father, and refuse to obey their mother. Thus all holiness must die in them; they will follow their own lusts, and bring death and destruction on themselves and on thee

and thy house. Behold, this is the leprosy which drives me away."

Then Eli was still more terrified; but it came to pass as Judah had foretold.



PERFECTION.

Amos one day visited his friend Bildad;—and behold, he found him leaning his gray head on both his hands, and weeping bitterly.

Then Amos said to his friend: "Why weepest thou?"

Bildad pointed to a bed in the chamber, where lay the corpse of a youth, his only son, who had fallen a victim to a contagious disease.

"Behold," said Bildad, "there lie my hopes, a prey to corruption."

"Thy hopes, indeed," answered Amos, sadly; "but will not the faith of my friend soften and overcome his woe?"

Then Bildad answered and said: "Alas, my faith is weak and faint, since my love and hope were disappointed thus. Did I not cultivate and improve the fine talents of the boy with careful hand? And now that he approached each day to perfection—" A flood of tears interrupted the father.

Amos was silent for a while; at last he said to Bildad: "Thou mournest that thou art unable to complete thy work. But, Bildad, shall not the eternal love which gave the youth his talents and his spirit, — shall it not complete what it hath begun?"

THE DAY OF REST.

“WHY does the eternal require the service of men!” asked Shamma of his master. “Why keep the Sabbath-day holy? The commandment was given merely for the discipline of brutish men. Is not one day like the other? The light of the sun shines on them all.”

The Rabbi answered and said: “When the sons of Israel returned from captivity into the land of promise, there lived on the frontier of the country of Mesopotamia an Israelite named Boni, a Levite and wise man, with his wife and children.

“And the angel of the Lord came to him in the form of a messenger of the king Arthasasta, and said: ‘Arise, and go with thy wife and children, thy man-servants and maid-servants, to the land of thy fathers, that thou mayest advise the people, and help to order wisely the city and the country.’

“Then Boni answered and said: ‘May my lord the king graciously receive my thanks; but how shall I find my way in the wilderness with my wife and children?’

“The messenger answered: ‘Go forth, and learn to confide in the king.’

“Then Boni went out as the angel had commanded him, early in the morning, with his wife and children. But



Boni doubted, and said: 'What will become of us?' And they went through the wilderness towards the west.

"When they had travelled six parasangs, and were very weary, behold, there stood a tent by the wayside, and a man came out and said to Boni and his companions: 'Rest here.' Then they rested and refreshed themselves.

"And Boni said: 'It is the goodness of the Lord that we find comfort here; but who will guide us in future?'"

"Then the man approached, and showed Boni the way, and marked it for him, both the road and the by-ways, on a parchment for the space of six parasangs, and said: 'Go in peace.'

"Now Boni continued with his servants on the path which had been pointed out to him, and they bore patiently the burden of the journey, for they remembered the comfort that they had received. And after having travelled six parasangs more, they found another tent; there was another servant of the king, who comforted them, and showed them the way, and the byways which they must avoid.

"Thus it was done for eighty days' journey; and when these were past, Boni and they who were with him reached the land of promise. And Boni knew that the angel of the Lord had guided him; and he took care with Ezra and Nehemiah that the Sabbath-day should be kept holy,—for the people had become disorderly.

"Behold, Shamma," said the master, "the life of man is a pilgrimage. Six parasangs are six days; but the seventh

is the day of rest, when the tent of the Lord is open for him, that he may ponder on his way and confide in the Lord. The brutish man despises the tent, and his way is lost in the wilderness; but the wise man finds refreshment, and reaches the land of promise."

THE TEARS.

ON a moonlight night Hillel was walking with his disciple Sadi in the garden of the Mount of Olives.

Then Sadi said: "Behold yonder man in the rays of the moon; what is he doing?"

Hillel said: "It is Zadok; he sits by the grave of his son, and weeps."

"Can Zadok not moderate his grief?" asked the youth. "Men call him the wise and the just."

Hillel said: "Is that a reason why he should not feel pain?"

"But," asked Sadi, "what advantage has the wise man over the foolish one?"

Then the master answered: "Behold, the bitter tear of his eye sinks to the ground; but his countenance is raised to heaven."



THE CORN-EAR AND THE THISTLE.

A COUNTRYMAN, with silver-white hair, walked with his youthful grandson in the field at the time of harvest. The old man jested with the reapers, that they were but children when compared to him, who had laboured in more than sixty harvests.

Now one of the reapers offered him a scythe; the old man took it, and, like a vigorous youth, cut down a swathe. And the reapers shouted and flourished their scythes in honour of him.

The youth, his grandson, said to him: "Grandfather, how is it that you have such a happy old age?"

The old man answered: "Look you, my son. Throughout my life I have confided in God, alike in evil as in pleasant days: thus I have always been of good courage. I have been diligent in my calling, and laboured faithfully; thus I have gained bodily strength and the blessing of God. I have walked uprightly before God, and peaceably with all men: and thus have I prepared for myself gladness and peace. And with advancing years all this has been strengthened and established in me by the grace of God. Do likewise, my son. Then thy old age will be like a rich sheaf, which the Lord of the harvest gathers joyfully into his garner."

"To what dost thou compare an evil old age?" asked the youth.

He walked in silence by the side of the old man. Then the latter, pointing with his staff to a thistle by the way-

side, said: "Behold here the image of a barren, disconsolate old age. It is lonely and unnoticed; its gray head is a sport of the winds, and its seeds are scattered abroad."



THE BLOSSOM.

"How could the All-sufficient want my thanks?" said Othniel to his master Simeon.

"Not He requireth them," answered the old man, "but thou."

"I myself in want of the thanks that I offer up to the Most High? What a contradiction!" said the youth.

The old man answered: "Does not the Creator bid the plant bloom before it brings forth fruit?"

"It is the perfection of the plant," said the youth.

"Gratitude," answered the old man, "is the blossom of the heart."

After a while Othniel asked: "Why does the plant bloom so late, and has not always flowers when it bears leaves?"

"The leaves," said the old man, "are the beginning of its blooming. First the plant adorns the earth, from whose maternal bosom it sprang; then the light of heaven brings it to perfection."

"But the fruit and the seed?" asked the youth.

And Simeon answered and said: "Both of these it gives back to the earth, from which it drew the sap, its nutriment. Thus it blooms, sows, and reaps without ceasing. Do thou likewise."

THE COURSE OF THE BROOK.

“BEHOLD the course of yonder brook,” said a teacher to his disciples. “Strongly and calmly it streams through the valley and the meadows, reflecting the image of the blue sky in the mirror of its clear waves. It waters the roots of the trees and shrubs that grow by its side, and its cool exhalations refresh the flowers and grass-blades round about.

“Then it flows through a barren tract of land full of sand and gravel; there its blessings end.

“Yet it continues to be the same clear brook fraught with blessings, though no one enjoys its bounty.

“Behold, a wild boar rushes in, parting the sparkling waves. The animal drinks from the floods, which cool his burning sides; the mud, raised by the sudden commotion, sinks again to the bottom.

“Now a weary wanderer bends over the limpid crystal, quenches his thirst, and cools his glowing brow; then hastens on, refreshed and grateful.

“Where is the source and origin of the lovely brook?

“Look up yonder! Dost thou see the towering peak of the mountain, and the cave surrounded by rugged rocks? There, in the deep bosom of the earth, is the hidden spring of the brook.

“But from whence come the never-failing source, and the inexhaustible supply?

"Behold, the top of the mountain touches the vault of heaven, veiled by the dewy clouds.

"Where is the end of the brook?

"Ever increasing as it rolls onward, it falls into the arms of the ocean; from thence it returns to the clouds."

Thus said the master; and his disciples recognised the image of heavenly love, and its agency on earth.

THE PROGRESS OF SIN.

A MAN had a young son of mischievous disposition, whom he suffered to do whatever he pleased. He used to throw burs at the people who passed, or who came to his father's house, to stick to their hair or their clothes; and his father laughed at it.

A grave man, to whom the boy did the same, heard him laugh, and he turned round and said: "Listen to reason, and teach the boy better while he is yet young; your laughing may be changed into weeping."

However, they laughed still more; the boy's malice and wickedness increased with his years, and he threw mud and stones at the people. Now the father tried to check him; but the boy laughed him to scorn.

The bones of the son are bleaching on the gibbet before the face of his father; but the father sees it not, for tears have extinguished his eyesight.



THE SURETY.

AN only daughter, the joy and comfort of her parents, was seized by a cruel disease, and died. Her father and mother wept three days for her; then the little girl was buried.

When the father returned from the funeral, he was inconsolable; and his grief increased in the silent desolate house. And he murmured, saying: "Why has God done this to us?"

Then the mother took courage, dried her tears, looked .

up cheerfully, and said to the father: "Oh, let us murmur no more, lest we tempt the Lord. If our poor love is so great that we refuse to be comforted for the loss of our heart's darling,—how great must be the love of Him who hath created every father's and mother's heart! He hath taken our little girl to Himself;—blessed be the name of the Lord."

However, the father said: "How canst thou tell? Alas, it seems to me an illusion of grief."

Then the mother of the child rose, and said: "My heart answers for the truth. Behold, my mother's love is everlasting;—how should the father-love of the Eternal deceive me?"

THE NEW CREATION.

A NOBLEMAN had inherited from a rich uncle an extensive tract of land, and a village. But the land was marshy, unfruitful, and desolate.

The new proprietor ordered the marshes and pools to be drained, and he planted all kinds of trees and shrubs; so that it became a pleasant garden and a park, which extended to the hamlet.

Several years afterwards, his former teacher visited him; and the nobleman showed him how the once useless marsh was drained, and converted into a beautiful garden. His old master surveyed every thing with pleasure, praising

the whole and each separate part. The nobleman told him that he purposed to enlarge the plantation, and to keep different kinds of game in the park; promising himself much pleasure from his little creation. Then his old teacher answered: "Thou deservest this, as thou hast changed the dead marsh into a habitation of life and joy. But one thing is wanting in this creation to make it perfect."

"What can that be?" asked the nobleman.

"Knowest thou not," said the old man, "when the Lord God had created the garden of Eden he put MAN there?"

The rich man answered not, but pondered these words in his heart; and when, during the next spring, his old faithful master visited him again, he took him to the end of the park, where two new buildings were erected.

The old man smiled, pressed the nobleman's hand, and said: "I knew that thy heart would understand me. Now love has finished the work."

One of the buildings was an orphan-asylum, the other a school.



THE FIRST SABBATH.

THE sixth day of creation drew towards its close. The sun had run his race. The darkness of evening began to overspread the youthful earth. The first-born son of creation stood on a hill in Eden, and near him Eloah, his guardian angel and companion.

Darker and darker it grew round the hills; twilight deepened into night, covering like a balmy veil the hills and dales.

The songs of the birds and the glad voices of the beasts were hushed; even the playful breezes seemed to have sunk to rest.

"What is this?" whispered the man to his celestial companion. "Will young creation cease, and be dissolved into nothingness?"

Eloah smiled, and said: "It is the repose of the earth."

Now the heavenly lights appeared; the moon rose, and the host of the stars came forth in serene brightness.

The man turned his eyes toward heaven in sweet surprise; but the angel of the Lord looked with pleasure on the son of earth as he gazed upward. Quieter yet was the night, and the nightingale's voice sounded louder and more melodious.

Eloah touched the man with his rod; he lay down on the hill and slept. The first dream came down to him while Jehovah formed for him a companion.

When the morning dawned, Eloah touched the slumberer. He awoke, and felt new life and strength rushing through his veins. The hills and dales emerged from the twilight; the young light descended and glittered on the limpid streams of Eden; the sun rose, bringing with it the new day. The man beheld the newly-created woman, the mother of the human race.

Surprise and delight filled his heart.

"Behold," said Eloah, "the divine is born out of silence. Therefore thou shalt keep this day holy, resting on it, and devoting it to the divine."

HILLEL AND MAIMON.

THE wise Hillel had a disciple whose name was Maimon ; and Hillel rejoiced in the promise of the youth and in the power of his mind. But soon he heard that Maimon trusted too much in his own wisdom, and entirely neglected prayer.

For the youth said in his heart: "Why should I pray? Does the Almighty need our words to help and to give? If so, He were a man. Can human prayers and sighs alter the counsel of the Eternal? Will not the All-bountiful grant, without our asking, what is needful and profitable for us?" These were the thoughts of the youth.

But Hillel was grieved in his soul that Maimon deemed himself wiser than the divine word, and he resolved to admonish him.

When Maimon came to him one day, Hillel was sitting thoughtfully in his garden, leaning his head on his hand. Then Maimon asked him: "Master, on what musest thou?"

Then Hillel lifted up his head and answered: "Behold, I have a friend who liveth on the produce of his patrimony, which till now he cultivated with care, so that it repaid his labour with abundance. But now he has put away the plough and the spade, and intends to leave the ground to itself. He will become poor, and suffer want."

"Has an evil spirit entered into him, or is he become foolish?" asked the youth.

"Neither the one nor the other," answered Hillel. "He is well versed in divine and human wisdom, and has a pious mind. But he says: 'The Lord is almighty; He may easily afford me sustenance, and needs not that I bow my head to the ground; and He is loving, and will provide my table and open his bountiful hand.' And who can gainsay him?"

"How," said the youth; "is not that tempting the Lord? Didst thou not tell him this, Rabbi?"

Then Hillel smiled, and said: "I will tell him this. Thou, my beloved Maimon, art the friend of whom I spoke."

"I?" said the youth, and was dismayed.

The old man answered and said: "Dost thou not tempt the Lord? Is prayer less noble than toil, and the spiritual gift inferior to the fruit of the field? And He who bids thee stoop for the terrestrial fruit, is He another than He who commands thee to lift up thy head to heaven for the heavenly blessing? O my son, be humble, believe, and pray!"

Thus said Hillel, and looked up to heaven. And Maimon went and prayed, and henceforth his life was godly.

POLYCARP AND HIS ENEMIES.

POLYCARP, the disciple of the Apostle whom the Lord loved, and like unto him in loveliness of heart, was bishop of the church at Smyrna at the time of the persecution. The enemies of truth hated and reviled him; but he was always serene, and his countenance cheerful and kind.

One day his disciples said to the pious bishop: "The longer we are with thee, father, and the greater our knowledge of thy character and thy ways, the more we marvel. Thou art like Daniel in the den of lions,—on all sides enemies surround thee, seeking to devour thee, though thou hast done them no wrong. But thou art still unchanged; never do we see a dark look on thy face, or hear a word of anger from thy lips. How canst thou do this, O father?"

The old man smiled, and said: "Do you think, my children, that the prophet with whom ye compare me was angry with the lions? The lions which surround me may assault my body, but cannot touch my heart, for that I have given to the Lord. Enemies,—though many may surround me outwardly,—enemies, my children, hath Polycarp none."

Thus said the old man, and his disciples remembered his words. But soon they knew it still more, when Polycarp stood amid the flames, singing praises to the Lord, while his countenance shone like gold in the furnace.



THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

"How often must I offer thanks to the Most High?" asked Othniel.

"Let thy heart be like the altar of incense in the sanctuary," said Simeon.

"The holy fire never expires on that altar," answered the youth.

"The hand of the priest," continued the old man, "fills it morning and evening with new incense. Thus the balmy cloud rises in the brightness of day, and scents with fragrance the shadows of night."



THE SACRED PICTURES.

A VALIANT knight, named Hildebrand, had been deeply injured and offended by Bruno, another knight. Anger burned in his heart; and he could hardly await the day to take bloody revenge on his enemy. He passed a sleepless night; and at dawn of day he girded on his sword, and sallied forth to meet his antagonist. But as it was very early, he entered a chapel by the way-side, and sat down and looked at the pictures which were suspended on the

walls, lit up by the rays of the morning sun. There were three pictures. The first represented our Saviour in the purple robe of scorn, before Pilate and Herod, and bore the inscription: "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." The second picture showed the scourging of Jesus, and under it was written: "He threatened not when He suffered." And the third was the crucifixion, with these words: "Father, forgive them."

When the knight had seen these words, he knelt down and prayed.

Now, when he left the chapel, he met servants coming from Bruno, who said: "We seek you. Our lord demands to speak with you; he is dangerously ill." And he went with them.

When Hildebrand entered the hall where the knight lay, Bruno said: "Forgive me my injustice. Alas, I have injured thee deeply!"

Then the other said kindly: "My brother, I have nothing to forgive thee." And they grasped each other's hand, embraced and comforted each other, and parted in sincere amity.

Then the light of evening was more lovely to the returning knight than the light of the morning had been.

THE EXPIATION.

A WISE and pious father sent his only beloved son abroad to increase his knowledge by observing the habits and customs of foreign countries and nations. But wicked men seduced the youth, and misled him to the destructive path of levity and sin.

After he had spent all his money, he was reduced to want and poverty; then the seducers left him, and he joined a band of robbers.

A friend of his father's heard this; he found out the hiding-place of the misguided youth, and walked that way in the twilight.

The young robber stopped him, threatened him, and demanded his money.

But the other offered him his money, saying: "I would willingly give thee much more than this, if thou wouldst come with me to my house, and save thy soul."

Now the youth recognised his father's friend, — he trembled, and cried: "Just God! what am I?"

The other took his hand, and said calmly: "Thou art now again the son of thy father: for thou knowest thyself and thy ways. Come away from this precipice, and follow me."

After these words, he took him to the inn where he lodged. The youth was overwhelmed with shame and remorse, and wept bitterly.

Now his friend said to him : "It is time to return home ; I will accompany thee."

The repentant youth was faint-hearted and trembled, and he said : "How can I, sinful and lost as I am, appear before the face of my father and ask his forgiveness?"

But the other answered : "Dost thou doubt thy father's love and pardon, after thou hast experienced the love of his friend?"

The youth answered, with tears : "Because his love is so great, my sin appears still greater. How could I look cheerfully upon him?"

When they drew nigh to his home, the youth hesitated, cast down his eyes, and said : "No ; I cannot pass the threshold." But his father saw him from afar, and knowing all, he met him with open arms. And when the youth fell at his feet with tears, his father raised him up, embraced him, and wept for joy, saying : "Thou art my beloved son, and livest. Oh, be of good courage, and trust in my love." Then he took him into his house, and did more good to him than before.

But the son continued silent and dejected, and mourned in secret ; and when he saw his father, he cast down his eyes.

Then his father said to him ; "Wilt thou always mourn ? Oh, be of good cheer ; and know at last my heart and my love!"

But the son answered : "Alas, my father, thou hast received me again without reproach and without punishment. How could I deserve so much love?"



Now his father said gently and kindly: "Thou hast punished thyself, my son. The night is past, and the morning of a new life rose for thee with thy tears. Now wipe them off, and walk cheerfully: for it is day."

The youth looked up to the kind countenance of his father; and from his humility grew forth manly faith and joyous grateful love.

THE FIDELITY OF URI.

A HEATHEN king summoned a pious bishop to his presence, and demanded that he should renounce his faith, and sacrifice to idols. The bishop said: "My lord and king, I will not do this."

Then the king was very wroth, and said: "Knowest thou not that thy life is in my hand, and that I have power to kill thee? One word from me, and it will be done."

"I know it," answered the bishop. "But suffer me to tell thee a simile, and to put a question for thee to decide upon."

"If one of thy most faithful servants fall into the hands of thine enemies, who forthwith try to seduce him to become a traitor to thee,—but thy servant being immovable, thy enemies take all his garments from him, drive him

naked away, with scorn and derision, — tell me, O king, when he comes to thee, wilt thou not give him of thy best robes, and pay with high honour the shame he hath endured?”

Then the king answered and said: “Yea; but to what purpose is this, and where has this been done?”

The pious bishop answered: “Behold, thou also canst take this earthly garment from me. But I have a lord and master who will give me a new robe. Should I regard the garment, and for its sake depart from the faith?”

Then the heathen king said: “Go thy way; I grant thee thy life.”

THE POOR-BOX.

THERE lived once a man, wealthy and and respected, whose name was Benedictus, that is, blessed. He had this name with good reason; for God had blessed him abundantly with riches, and all the world blessed him too; for he endeavoured to comfort and assist every man, — the stranger as well as his neighbour, and above all, the poor and the needy. This he did in the following way:

When he had passed a pleasant day with his friends, he used to go into his chamber and think: “There are many who have not enjoyed such a day; and I could not alter this, even if I were to invite as many again. Then he put as much money as the feast cost him into a box, which he

called the poor-box. When he heard of a destructive conflagration, he contributed liberally to the assistance of the unfortunate people. Then he looked at his house, and went into his chamber, saying: "Every thing is firm and safe!" and again he put money into the poor-box. Again, if he heard of a hail-storm, or an inundation, or other calamity, he added to the fund in the poor-box. If rare wines or costly furniture were offered to him, he purchased them, but with moderation, to adorn his house and to gladden his friends; and then he went into his chamber, and said: "I have been able to buy this, and to increase my store;" and he added to the poor-box, and sent often of the good wine to sick people to refresh them. Thus he did all his life.

When the hour came that he should die, the poor and the widows and orphans wept and lamented, saying: "Who will have pity on us when Benedictus is no more?"

But he said: "A good father takes care that his children suffer no want, even when he cannot be with them. Take the poor-box with all its contents. It belongs to the poor, the widows, and the orphans; distribute to them, and manage it carefully and prudently." Then he died, and it was done according to his will.

Thus the poor-box exists these hundred years, and the memory of the man is blessed.

THE BLADE OF WHEAT.

A FATHER and his son had ascended a high mountain, They saw the sun rise in glorious beauty, and before them the broad expanse of the ocean, and the immeasurable distance round about. Thunder-clouds were hovering around the middle of the mountain, and the thupder was rolling at their feet.

All this made a deep impression on the mind of the youth, and he praised aloud the glory of the Creator. But the father was silent.

When they returned to the valley, the father praised the beauty and the gladdening aspect of the waving corn-fields. Then the youth said: "Truly, my father, since we have been on the mountain, all other things appear trifling and contemptible to me."

The father laughed at him, and said: "Then you have descended smaller than you ascended, and your eye has been contracted instead of being enlarged. This was not my intention."

These words grieved the youth, and he said: "But, my father, the immeasurable view, the rising sun, the tempest at our feet,—all these tokens of the Almighty—"

"I know," said the father, smiling, "you are young. Through the outward cause the eternal was revealed to you. But greater is he in whose heart this revelation



dwells. Then his bodily eye is sharpened, and he will see this, nay, yet much more, in the single blade."

The youth walked in silence by his father's side, reflecting on what he had heard; then he said: "Father, teach me this."

Now the father pulled a blade of wheat from the field, and said: "I can show it, but not give it. The Lord alone makes the heart sure, and brightens the eye. Behold, this life sprung from a decaying grain of seed. Who has made this wonder a law? Behold, that the blade may increase in growth and support the ear without breaking, these simple knots support it; thus the field is waving. And now see the nutritious bread in the ocean of the golden ears.

"But wherefore count and measure with a childlike heart?"

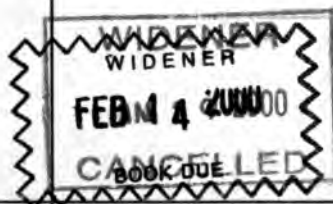
THE END.

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